A MISSION IN KASHMIR

A Mission in Kashmir

ANDREW WHITEHEAD

VIKING

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For my parents, Margaret and Arthur Whitehead

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Preface

Of all the missions in Kashmir that have left their mark on this book, my greatest debt is to those associated with St Joseph's mission in Baramulla. The convent and hospital there was the scene of one of the most violent and notorious events during the initial stages of the Kashmir conflict in 1947, and it was where my personal quest into the origins of the Kashmir dispute began. I am not a Catholic, nor indeed a believer, but I have been humbled by the kindness and generosity of the nuns of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary and the Mill Hill missionary priests. Sister Emilia, Dr Melanie, Sister Lucy, Sister Rosy and Sister Elaine took the time and trouble to welcome me at St Joseph's, to answer my queries and share their memories. Father Jim Borst in Srinagar sought out documents, and encouraged my interest in the attack on Baramulla. At Mill Hill in north London, the order's archivists, Father Tom O'Brien and more recently Father Hans Boerakker, have scoured their holdings on my behalf, photocopied documents and given permission for inclusion of extracts from their archives in this book. They have been unfailingly helpful. Maureen Corboy, the last surviving sibling of Monsignor Shanks, not only sent me all her mementoes of her much loved brother, but also gave me permission to make whatever use I wished of them.

I have been helped enormously by some of those who lived through the attack on St Joseph's and by the relatives of those killed. Doug and Tom Dykes have assisted and encouraged, provided documents and photographs, as I have intruded into the most difficult of memories of their parents' death. Tery Barreto in Nagpur put me in touch with his relative Angela Aranha, a survivor of the attack on the Baramulla mission. She has been a generous support in my research. Another survivor Francis Rath, who spent most of his life a short walk from St Joseph's, not only told me his story but sought out photos from that time. Leela Thompson (nee Pasricha) and her son and daughter-in-law Inder and Jane Cheema made me wonderfully welcome during a fall weekend in Maine, retelling

memories of getting out of Baramulla just ahead of the tribesmen's arrival. Frank Leeson shared with me not only memories of evacuating the mission, but his personal photographic archive from 1947.

The remarkable letter from the maharaja about Kashmir's accession to India was made available by Sudeep Budhiraja, whose great-grandfather was the initial recipient. Pran Nath Jalali showed me his cache of documents relating to the National Conference militia. Peta Adès entrusted me with outsize albums of newspaper cuttings that her father Sydney Smith had compiled of his own articles. Alexandra Haight Furr sent me copies of extracts from the scrapbook of her father Russell Haight. And to all those in Srinagar, Baramulla, and Muzaffarabad, in Jammu, Delhi and Islamabad and elsewhere who have welcomed me into their homes, offered hospitality and shared memories of Kashmir in 1947—thank you.

In *A Mission in Kashmir* I have combined the two disciplines which I have some claim to practise, journalism and history. But it is much more a work of history than of reportage. At its heart are the stories of those caught up in the first Kashmir conflagration—recorded on cassette or disc half a century or more later, or in some cases retrieved from the bylined articles of reporters who were on the scene or disinterred from the archives. There are profound issues about making use of memory—shared and recited memory at that—to establish a narrative of what happened many decades earlier. The tenacity of the Kashmir dispute makes that concern more acute. Yet similar problems about authority, accuracy and inherent bias surround published memoirs, official archives and other more conventional source material for historians.

By retrieving and making use of personal accounts of Kashmir in 1947—from all perspectives and vantage points—I have tried to reflect the complexity of the Kashmir issue and to break away from established narratives devised in support of one or other particular interest group. I have also sought to give a human dimension to an acute geopolitical fault line. I have taken trouble when referring to material gathered from personal interviews not to paraphrase. On occasion, I have edited out digressions and repetition, but all the words that appear within quotation marks were spoken. I have sought a standardized spelling based on current usage, but I have not amended spellings and capitalization in quotes and extracts from other works. The heartland of Kashmir and its culture and the area at the core of the continuing dispute is the Kashmir Valley, and my focus has been on the Valley more than other areas of the former princely state.

I have sought to immerse myself in the vast secondary literature about the Kashmir dispute. The library at the University of Michigan, its assiduous staff, and its policy of allowing researchers access to every nook and cranny of its immense holdings of books and journals, gave me the chance to consult every published item on Kashmir I requested and alerted me to many of which I had been unaware. The library also tracked down on my behalf microfilm archives of Indian, American and British newspapers. I spent a semester in Michigan in 2003 as a BBC-sponsored journalism fellow, much of which I devoted to the study of Kashmir in 1947. My thanks go to Charles Eisendrath at Wallace House, who presides sagely over both the Knight-Wallace fellowship programme and his fellows. Among the many excellent South Asia specialists at Ann Arbor, Ashu Varshney offered friendship, a fizzing intellect and lots of encouragement.

I have also delved into files held at the British National Archives at Kew and the India Office Records at the British Library, and benefited from the kindness and expertise of their staff. In all my researches, only one door has been barred to me. In Delhi, I sought the permission of the director general of archives to consult the original of the instrument of accession which joined Kashmir to India. He referred my request to the ministry of home affairs which, I was told—nice to think that the play on words was intentional—'has not acceded your request'.

Ravi Singh at Penguin India embraced this book with wonderful relish and enthusiasm, and Manjula Lal has saved me from errors grievous and otherwise. Urvashi Butalia, Maggie Hanbury, Lara Heimert and V.K. Karthika helped *A Mission in Kashmir* on its way to finding a publisher. Urvashi also commented on several draft chapters. Her own work, retrieving and giving value to personal experiences of Partition, has been a beacon of inspiration. Alexander Evans has a comprehensive knowledge of and deep affection for Kashmir, matched only by his generosity towards those who seek to emulate his scholarship. I have gained greatly from his friendship and guidance. Owen Bennett Jones, Brian Cloughley, Parvez Dewan, my good friend and colleague Sam Miller and Mridu Rai have also read parts of this book at various stages of its development and I am grateful for their encouragement and generously given advice. Bill Reid and Chris Snedden, both scholars of Kashmir in Australia, provided advice, articles and introductions. Ashima Kaul helped me track down veterans of the National Conference militia, while Omar Khan alerted me to and sent copies of newsreel coverage of the Indian army airlift to Kashmir. I am also grateful to Ronald Pont and to other members of the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia who

responded to my pleas for information about Kashmir in 1947 with many valuable recollections and suggestions.

My colleague Haroon Rashid in Peshawar managed to find and interview a veteran of the 1947 lashkar and cast an eye over draft chapters relating to the Frontier Province. Charles Haviland and Bhavna Kumar also conducted interviews on my behalf. Mallika Menon zealously combed through the patchy holdings of the Muslim League newspaper *Dawn*, now one of Pakistan's leading dailies, in Delhi's Nehru Memorial Library. Many Indian army veterans helped me on my way, and I am particularly grateful to Patric Emerson of the Indian Army Association, to Ben Suter of the Sikh Regiment veterans' association and to Stanley Menezes. Colonel Anil Bhat helped me gain access to the photographic archive of the ministry of defence in Delhi. News cameraman Phil Goodwin took the photograph of me that adorns the dust jacket. I also want to thank my fellow editors of *History Workshop Journal*—being of their number gave me the confidence to persist with this book.

At the British Library, Penny Brook went to exceptional trouble to secure permission from the heirs of Sir George Cunningham to quote from his diary. Toby White gave me permission to include extracts from the writings of Margaret Bourke-White and Dr Karan Singh has kindly allowed me to include brief passages from his autobiographical writings. The *Daily Express*, *The Times*, the *Times of India* and the *New York Times* have all given consent for the inclusion of excerpts from these titles and I am happy to acknowledge their kindness. I am also grateful to many others who have given copyright permission and my apologies in those cases where we have tried but failed to locate those who own copyright.

This is not in any sense a BBC book, yet without the BBC it would never have happened. It was as a BBC News correspondent that I first visited Kashmir in 1993 and my work for the BBC as correspondent, programme maker, presenter and latterly (as India country director of the BBC World Service Trust) a protagonist of development communications has repeatedly taken me back to Kashmir. In all my years in South Asia, I have made more visits to Kashmir and spent more time there than anywhere else outside my adopted home city of Delhi. I have seen the line of control from both sides, met separatist leaders based in Pakistan and interviewed Indian generals at their Badami Bagh base in Srinagar. I have been careful to avoid taking sides in my reporting on Kashmir and I have sought the same impartiality in writing this book. Nothing in its pages should be construed in any way as reflecting the opinion of the BBC.

I have benefited from the wisdom and friendship of the BBC correspondent in Srinagar Altaf Hussain and earlier of his predecessor Yusuf Jameel. Altaf has twice accompanied me to Baramulla and also advised on various draft chapters. Through them, I have had the pleasure and privilege of meeting many Kashmiris and seeing much of their Valley. In as much as I understand Kashmir, it is down to them. What I have failed to understand is my own fault.

Writing a book puts a strain on any household. My family has been enormously generous and indulgent. Samira and Rohan spurred me on more than they have realized by their innocent enquiries along the lines of: 'How many chapters have you written this weekend, Dad?' My wife Anuradha Awasthi has supported, shielded, cajoled and criticised; she has knocked my ideas into shape and knocked some of my more wacky ideas out of court; she has read this book more times than anyone ever should. And my parents nurtured in me an inquisitiveness, a desire to know and to understand, which has been at the heart of my career as a news journalist and which has also found expression in this study. My mother has not lived to see this volume in print, but both she and my father have helped give birth to this book, and to them it is dedicated.

ANDREW WHITEHEAD

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An Italian in Kashmir

It all started with Sister Emilia. She was ninety-one when I first met her—a rotund, red-faced nun from Verona with the disconcerting habit of smiling beatifically and chuckling wistfully as she recounted tales of terror and brutality. Emilia Montavani was a survivor of the attack on the Christian mission at Baramulla. Half a century later, she was still living there, in a remote outpost at the sharp end of the Kashmir Valley, close to the ceasefire line which partitions the area between India and Pakistan. That chance encounter provided the key to unlocking an extraordinarily powerful story, an interlinking tale of personal tragedy in India's Himalayan foothills and the inception of one of the most destabilising geopolitical rivalries. Sister Emilia gave me access to a fresh and illuminating perspective on how the Kashmir crisis first erupted—who the attackers were, how they were organised and commanded, and why they failed in their goal of capturing Kashmir for Pakistan. It challenges the established accounts of the various claimants to the Kashmir Valley. And in a narrative that has so often seemed preoccupied by territory and by national pride, it puts people—their memories, their aspirations, their tribulations—at the centre of the Kashmir story.

The tragedy Sister Emilia bore witness to is still being played out in and around Baramulla, embittering relations between what are now nuclear powers and pitting armed Islamic radicals against what the Indian government sees as the forces of secularism. Ever since India and Pakistan gained independence from Britain in August 1947, they have been twinned in conflict about who rules Kashmir. The dispute has disfigured the region's development, provoked wars and been the root cause of a hard-fought separatist insurgency. It has also blighted the lives of millions of Kashmiris and ravaged an area of majestic beauty. The origins of the conflict have been clouded by partisan rhetoric and the underlying issues have been obscured by the clamour of competing nationalisms. Events in the small riverside town of Baramulla in the autumn of 1947 determined

the outcome of the first bitter tussle for control of the Kashmir Valley. It is where the Kashmir crisis took shape.

My mission on that first visit to Baramulla was to record memories of the turmoil that accompanied Britain's pull-out from India. I had travelled to the Kashmir Valley many times to report on the battle between armed separatists and Indian security forces. I had repeatedly grappled with the difficulties of reconciling two sharply different accounts of every event and incident, and with the precarious phone lines that hampered attempts to file news stories from Ahdoo's hotel, the reporters' base in the Kashmir capital, Srinagar. On this visit, I had a broader purpose. I was travelling across South Asia scouring for material for a series of radio programmes looking back on the trauma of Partition in 1947, the blood-stained division of the British Raj at the moment of independence into Hindu-majority India and the Muslim nation of Pakistan. Kashmir had its own distinct story to tell about Partition-era violence. Elsewhere it was a confused agglomeration of politically instigated killings, local power struggles, and vicious retribution. At its simplest, the violence set Muslims against Hindus and Sikhs. Many millions chose, or were forced, to migrate and about half a million people were killed in one of the bloodiest convulsions of the century.[1] The Kashmir Valley did not initially endure communal carnage. But it witnessed an invasion, and violence that was political, religious and communal in nature, starting just as the Partition killings in Punjab were beginning to subside. The fighting developed into war between the newly independent nations. Kashmir lay between India and Pakistan. It was a princely state, where a Hindu maharaja ruled a largely Muslim populace. As tribal fighters from Pakistan crossed into Kashmir, the Catholic mission at Baramulla was ransacked and then transformed into the invaders' military base. It was subject to repeated aerial bombing raids and visitations by both Pakistani and Indian armies, before the initial campaign was decided in India's favour.

I had not intended to call at the convent and adjoining mission hospital on that first visit to Baramulla. I'd been told that there was no one at the mission with memories stretching back as far as 1947. But the day didn't go entirely to plan. Indian intelligence had got word of my impending visit to the town. The local journalist who was seeking out senior citizens to talk to me had twice been hauled in for questioning about what I was up to and who I would be meeting. He wanted me out of his hair and off his patch as quickly as possible. So I was on my way back from Baramulla to Srinagar much earlier in the day than I had

expected. The route took me past the brick-red corrugated roof of the mission chapel, peeping over a stout roadside wall. I asked the driver to pull in. We parked by a well-patronised dispensary. A small circle of garden had, as its centrepiece, a statue of the Virgin Mary in a small grotto. Beyond, a covered walkway led to a veranda around a larger garden, linking four neat, small hospital wards, an operating theatre, and what was once an X-ray room. In the other direction, beyond a sputum testing centre, stood a functional modern hostel for nursing students. The chapel, at close inspection, had clearly been renovated and expanded since 1947, and adjoining it was the convent, which seemed to be the oldest of the mission buildings. The sister superior, a Goan Catholic, was summoned. She heard out my quest for eyewitnesses of the tribal forces' attack. 'Well,' she replied, 'there is one sister still here from those times. I think she may be sleeping. I'll see if she will meet you.'

Sister Emilia, neatly attired in a light grey nun's habit, needed no convincing to share her experience of violation and valour. This had been the mission's greatest moment—when the faith and vocation of the nuns and priests had been put to its greatest test. 'There were rumours that they were coming—we were thinking they won't do nothing to us,' Sister Emilia declared in a lilting accent. 'The Monday after the feast of Christ the King they reach here. Then they started to shoot. They came inside. We were working still. Our dispensary was working still. The hospital had patients. They were on the veranda of the hospital, going from one ward to another. They say: shoot, kill, *maro* (attack).'

Sitting in the wood-panelled parlour at St Joseph's, reminiscing in the light of a paraffin lamp, Sister Emilia told me how raiders had stormed the convent and mission hospital. They had killed a patient and a nurse—and a young Spanish nun, a friend of hers. The husband of the hospital doctor was shot dead in front of her. The mother superior had been felled by another bullet. A British army officer was also shot, as was his wife, who had come to the hospital to give birth. In a matter of minutes, four people had been killed, and four more seriously wounded, two of whom died within hours. The attackers had ransacked every room, looted personal possessions and desecrated the chapel. I couldn't bring myself to ask about the reports of rape. The elderly Italian nun retold the episode as if it had been an adventure, almost with relish. But the memory was taking its toll on her. Another nun confided that Sister Emilia still had nightmares about the attack. In 1947, all but one of the nuns at Baramulla had been from Europe. Fifty years later, Emilia Montavani was the only

European left at the mission. She had come to India in 1930, and arrived at St Joseph's in 1933, as a young nun aged twenty-eight. It remained her home for seventy years.

The bearded, black-turbanned attackers who for decades disturbed Sister Emilia's sleep were Muslim Pathan tribesmen. They came as a lashkar, a tribal raiding party, from Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP), close to Afghanistan. They acted in the name of Islam and of Pakistan. These hardy hill communities were, and still are, known as tribes because their lives are bound up with tribal and clan identity, custom, and codes of law, religion and honour. The tribal agencies where they lived had a special status under British rule, a degree of autonomy almost without parallel, which persisted into the independence era and has only recently begun to erode. Sister Emilia told me how these raiders had lined her up in the convent garden alongside other nuns who had survived the initial onslaught. They were told they would be shot. Her deliverer was a Pakistani army officer who, it transpired, had been educated by nuns. 'He saved us. He said something to them in their own language, and they put down their arms.' This was a telling anecdote, with its implications of a military command over the tribal fighters, and of attempts to maintain discipline.

The arrival of this Pathan officer, Saurab Hyat Khan, put an end to the initial bloodshed. But it was not the end of the mission's ordeal. All the survivors—nuns, priests, nurses, patients, and local non-Muslim refugees—were herded into one small ward of the mission hospital. There were about eighty people in all, including broods of children, and three British boys, one newly born, who had been orphaned in the attack. They spent the next eleven days crowded together, cramped, hungry and in perpetual fear that the tribesmen might again turn on them.

When I first stumbled on the story of the attack on Baramulla, it was on the cusp of slipping out of living memory altogether. The tribal army's occupation, the brutal assault on the mission, and the looting, killing and abduction, particularly of non-Muslims, has been the most momentous event in the town's modern history. At St Joseph's, only Sister Emilia had first-hand memories to rehearse. In the town, there were a few more old-timers who were willing to share their memories. The sense of a hidden and intense drama, a window on to a deeply contested historical episode which would soon be barred and shuttered, gave urgency to my resolve to retrieve individual stories and hunt down archive sources. I wrote an article about my visit to the mission for a daily newspaper in Delhi. I received several letters in response. One came from an Indian army veteran

who had been involved in beating back the tribal invaders, and another was from a relative of one of those killed at the mission. I was on my way. What started as curiosity had become a quest, and as I came to understand more of the interplay between events at St Joseph's and the initial military contest for Kashmir, it became a personal mission to uncover, retrieve, piece together and explain how and why Kashmir became a battleground.

Sister Emilia told me, in the course of several conversations at Baramulla, how she had cared for the orphaned newborn baby of Colonel and Mrs Dykes. During their captivity in the mission hospital, she had managed to get him milk. She had done her best to comfort the older Dykes boys, then aged two and five. 'I was touched—see[ing] the little boy clutching the other one and crying. Because there were no mummy, no daddy. So I said don't cry, don't cry. They are in heaven. They are praying for us. Don't cry. [The] bigger [boy], he was trying to console the other, smaller [boy].' She had often wondered how their lives had turned out. Those children born at the curtain call of empire had been touched by tragedy at such a young age. What had happened to them? How had they come to terms with the death of their parents?

Tracking down the Dykes brothers took many months. Letters sent to every Dykes in the phone book in the colonel's home city of Edinburgh produced a handful of replies, but no leads. There was little to go on. I knew the full names of the parents, Tom and Biddy Dykes, but not of their sons. Letters to regimental centres, and internet searches, led nowhere. In the end, it was a note passed on by an Indian army veterans' association that established contact. I came home from work one evening to be told that a man called Douglas Dykes had rung for me, and would ring again. He was the middle of the three brothers. All three men had spent much of their adult lives in southern Africa. The oldest, Tom Dykes junior, lived near Johannesburg. We wrote to each other. I sent him photographs of his parents' graves and a copy of his father's military service record from the archives. He sent me old family snapshots, and a copy of an extraordinarily poignant letter written at Baramulla by his mother ten days before her death.

Biddy Dykes wrote to her sister Muriel just days after giving birth—a gossipy family missive, laced with portents of unrest. Partition had dislocated the banking system along with just about everything else. She had run out of cash, and no one would accept cheques. 'Post arrived—Hells bells I've just had another cheque returned.' The last letter from her soldier husband had taken a month to reach her: 'He may be dead for all I know.' The local administration was in disarray: 'The Mother

Superior is at her wits end.' So too was Biddy Dykes, encumbered by two small children, a newborn baby and a dog, and anxious about when her husband would arrive to take them all home. 'I'd give anything to see Tom walk in this evening, he said in one letter he would be up today. But I don't think there is an earthly chance. I can't wire any more for money as I haven't any. Hav[e]n't even wired Tom and couldn't wire home either. There's nobody to grouse over the matter with. The nuns are all foreign and hardly speak English. So here you've got it. I've no doubt it will all work out but at this stage I don't feel like coping.'[2]

It didn't work out, of course, and Tom junior told me in his letters that his recollections of the tragedy were patchy, yet acute and troublingly detailed. A few months later, I met Tom and his Afrikaner wife, Marlene, on the lawn of his brother's home in Dorking, outside London. He shared with me memories of events surrounding his parents' deaths that he had never discussed even within the family. He didn't see his parents killed and never saw their bodies. He recalled that a young playmate at the mission, the doctor's daughter, told him that his mother and father were dead.

That young girl was Angela Barretto. She and Tom had never met again after their shared ordeal at the mission. I managed to track her down to her home in the infotech city of Bangalore. Soft-spoken and bespectacled, she voiced distant memories of the incident, and proudly displayed photographs of her parents and sisters. She was four years old at the time of the raid. Her father was killed by the tribesmen. Her mother, the hospital surgeon, had been obliged to treat the injuries of the attackers as well as their victims. Angela had never set down her memories of the incident, but prompted by my interest and encouraged by a half-sister, she wrote an account of the attack.[3] Her recollections, borrowed in large part from the stories she had heard from her mother, echoed Tom's on many counts of mood and detail.

The disconcerting rawness of their memories and the emotional punch of their accounts impelled me to seek out other voices. I was intrigued by Colonel Tom Dykes, a career soldier in the British Indian army. He had been one of the very few British casualties during the tumult and carnage of Partition, and he died just at the moment of Britain's disengagement from India. I tracked down officers, Indian and British, who had served alongside him, and women who had been friends with Biddy, his wife. Some years later, I went for a convivial lunch in the well-heeled cathedral city of Salisbury in southern England—along with Colonel Dykes's son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter—for one of

the last annual reunions of British veterans of Tom's regiment, the Sikh Regiment. The dwindling band of old soldiers, just a handful still fit enough to muster, looked back mistily at what had often been the defining experience of their lives. Almost sixty years after independence, a human aspect of Britain's colonial involvement with India was fading away, and with it a sense of direct connection with that experience.

I felt a compulsion to seek other testimony of the attack on the Baramulla mission. Through persistence and luck, I tracked down three men who had taken refuge in the mission during the invasion. One was living in Karachi and another in Kolkata. They both set down in writing their recollections, but did not want to be interviewed and do not wish to be named. The third survivor, Dr Francis Rath, a Catholic, was still in Baramulla and living just a few minutes walk from the mission. He was twenty-two at the time the tribal army entered town and took shelter at St Joseph's with most of his family. 'We never thought it would be such a holocaust,' he told me. 'And once they arrived it was terrible. Everywhere they were firing. Every corner.' In another part of town, a Sikh family spoke of the suffering their community faced as the lashkar advanced—of male relatives killed and female relatives abducted. Two elderly Muslim residents, one at the time openly sympathetic to the invaders, recalled how their houses and businesses had been looted by members of the lashkar. Other townspeople also spoke of the sense of shock that an armed force which had proclaimed that it was liberating Kashmiri Muslims from their Hindu maharaja had resorted to ransacking Muslim homes.

Further afield, on the English south coast, I met Frank Leeson, a military veteran of the North West Frontier, who had helped to evacuate the survivors at the mission. He spoke of the excitement with which the armed tribesmen descended on the Kashmir Valley and shared with me his photographic archive, including a magnificent portrait of members of the lashkar. On the coast of Maine in the United States, I met the proud and indomitable Leela Thompson and her son Inder Cheema. Their family had sought sanctuary at St Joseph's. Both had telling memories of Baramulla and Srinagar at the time of the attack. And eventually I found the voice that I had imagined would elude me. Khan Shah Afridi, almost blind, paralysed in both legs, and claiming an age of over a hundred, recounted how he had fought in Baramulla as part of the lashkar. He spoke in Pashto about how the prompting of a highly regarded Muslim cleric in the Frontier had impelled him to go on jihad, or holy war, in Kashmir. 'We shot whoever we saw in Baramulla. We did not know how many we killed,' he reminisced, lying on a cot outside his mud-brick

village home in northern Pakistan. He had some qualms about the extent of the violence, but none about the justice of the cause.

There was another aspect to the attack on the mission that caught my attention and fuelled my determination to unravel the story of what happened there and why. The raid occurred not in the year, or the month or the week that the Kashmir crisis first blew up, but on the very day that it all started. The day the Baramulla convent and hospital was sacked—27 October 1947—was also the day that Lord Mountbatten, the first Governor General of independent India, accepted Maharaja Hari Singh's accession of his princely state to India. At first light on that Monday morning, troops of India's Sikh Regiment began an airlift in Dakota planes from Palam airbase outside Delhi to the rudimentary landing strip at Srinagar. It was a slow process. Each plane could take fewer than twenty soldiers, and just 500 pounds of equipment.[4] By dusk, about 300 Indian troops had landed in the Kashmir Valley. They were the first Indian troops in Kashmir. India has had a military presence there ever since, at times perhaps 1,000-fold the initial contingent.

Within hours of landing, the advance guard of the Sikh Regiment reached the outskirts of Baramulla, thirty-five miles up the road from Srinagar. They could hear the reverberations of the violence, but had insufficient numbers to advance. They didn't then know that the acting commandant of their regimental centre, Colonel Dykes, was among the victims. The following morning, the troops fought their first encounter with the tribal invaders from Pakistan. India fired its first shots in the battle for Kashmir.

At hand to hear those shots was a war reporter for a British newspaper. Sydney Smith of the *Daily Express* was holidaying with his wife on a houseboat in Srinagar when the invasion started. He begged a lift to the front line and filed the first eyewitness account of the lashkar's advance into Kashmir. A few days later, he accompanied India's newly landed commanding officer towards Baramulla. The Indian officer was shot dead by the tribesmen. Smith was captured. He was lucky to survive, and even luckier to be consigned by his captors to the hospital ward at the Baramulla mission. When he eventually reached safety, he filed a breathless account of the fighting in Kashmir, the attack on the mission, and the suffering endured by those trapped there.[5] The *Daily Express* proclaimed the scoop to be 'the year's most exciting story'. Under the banner headline 'Ten Days of Terror', Smith recounted how 'ravaging hordes of Pathan tribesmen' had looted and killed European nuns and their patients, and then confined the survivors—'a quivering heap of screaming children

and petrified women'—in the hospital's baby ward. It bore echoes of the captivity stories from the Afghan wars of the previous century: wild, bearded natives impelled by Islam and tribal honour to launch a cruel attack on brave and stoical Europeans. This certainly was the aspect of Smith's reporting that was seized upon by the best-selling writer H.E. Bates for his novel *The Scarlet Sword*, which borrowed from news cuttings to construct a fictional account of the attack on the Baramulla mission.

There were three other foreign correspondents in Kashmir when the conflict erupted—two of them conducting a surreptitious romance, again on a houseboat on Dal lake. Their reports and private papers provide another contemporary reference point for the account of a crisis which has mainly been told through the later, often less reliable, memoirs of the key political players. The Indian press corps also descended on Srinagar as soon as they could persuade the Indian army to give them space on the transport planes. Their graphic reports on the fighting around Srinagar, of the mood in the embattled Kashmir capital and of the devastation discovered in Baramulla are valuable source material.

As a news correspondent myself, I have come to meet many people in Kashmir from different walks of life. Among them has been Father Jim Borst, a Dutch-born, Cambridge-educated missionary who has lived most of his adult life in Kashmir. I've often seen him striding through the streets of Srinagar, a tall, distinguished man with a shock of grey hair, habitually wearing a full-length white priest's robe with a simple brown Kashmiri shawl and open sandals. Father Borst is a Mill Hill missionary, a member of a Catholic religious order that seeks to bring the gospel to some of the least accessible parts of the world. He once taught at St Joseph's school in Baramulla and at the time of my visits he was still the confessor to the nuns in the convent. 'I've come to know the sisters very closely,' Father Borst told me in the priests' house alongside the Holy Family Catholic church in Srinagar. 'I know the story of what happened there in October 1947 in great detail. It's become part of my own history.' He made available to me the local church's modest but enlightening cache of documents relating to the attack and its aftermath. More than that, he pointed me in the direction of the order's well-kept archive at its Mill Hill headquarters on the northern outskirts of London.

Among their holdings is an old desk diary from the early 1950s, printed in the city of Lahore in Pakistan. In it, a Mill Hill missionary, Father George Shanks, set down by hand his personal account of the attack on the mission. Father Shanks had been the senior priest at Baramulla, and was described by the *Daily Express*'s Sydney Smith as the 'hero' of

the affair. 'He became our leader and comforter as we were harassed day and night by tribesmen and dive-bombed and cannon-shelled by Tempests and Spitfires of the Indian Air Force. I saw him hiding Sikh and Hindu girls, defying loot-mad Pathans to carry out their threats to take all women off to the bazaar.'[6] Father Shanks's diary has never been published, nor cited in any account of the Kashmir crisis. I can't be sure whether anyone apart from Father Shanks had ever read it before I chanced upon the document in the bowels of Mill Hill. In the course of one hundred or so pages, tantalizingly incomplete, the missionary set down the most detailed account of the most dramatic event in the eruption of the Kashmir crisis.

Father Shanks described the mood in Baramulla as word spread of the tribal army's approach. Most non-Muslims fled. Many local Muslims looked upon the invaders as delivering them from their unpopular maharaja. He recorded the scene as the ragtag army entered the town: 'dirty, bloodstained, ill-kempt, with ragged beards + hair; some carrying a blanket, most completely unequipped; . . . with rifles of Frontier make, double barrelled shotguns, revolvers, daggers, swords, axes + here + there a Sten gun—jostling one another, shouting, cursing + brawling, they came on in a never-ending stream.'[7] In spite of its disorganisation and indiscipline, the lashkar advanced deep into the Kashmir Valley, scattered the maharaja's forces, and initially managed to hold its own against Indian troops. The tribesmen reached as far as the outskirts of Srinagar and the perimeter of the Valley's only airstrip. But when the military advantage turned, the invaders pulled out of Kashmir with a haste that astounded both their Indian adversaries and their Pakistani sponsors.

After my first encounter with Sister Emilia, I twice went back to visit her at St Joseph's convent. Both times, I again heard her story of the tribesmen's raid, told with the same engaging smile and air of humility. I have walked around the grounds, gentle and still in spite of the main road that skirts the compound. On the far side of the convent lies a small, unkempt orchard, where those two most graceful of Kashmir's birds, bulbuls and hoopoes, forage and fan themselves in the dappled mountain sun. It's the site of a tiny cemetery. Just five graves, the white paint on the gravestones peeling, and the shingle tangled in weeds. Beyond, the hills rise sharply, with fir trees silhouetted slightly menacingly against the mountain mist. It was down those hills that the raiders made their way into the mission. The graves are those of their victims.

On the other side of the compound, just beyond the kitchen garden that was once Sister Emilia's personal fiefdom, is the nuns' graveyard. This is where, in January 2004, Emilia Montavani was interred. She lies

buried next to her friend Mother Teresalina, the young Spanish assistant to the mother superior, who was killed in the raiders' attack. For almost sixty years of her life, Sister Emilia had witnessed the cost of the failure to resolve the dispute which she had seen erupting around her. In recent years, Baramulla district has been regarded as a stronghold of armed separatism. The town has suffered heavier casualties, and endured much more prolonged trauma, than anything encountered during the brief but brutal visitation of the tribal lashkar. The nature of the conflict has changed. But at its root is the same faultline that first opened up as the tribesmen from the Frontier scaled the walls of the mission back in October 1947. One of the nuns told me that prayers are said every day at St Joseph's for peace in Kashmir. It was a priority in their prayer. 'But there's a long way to go to attain real peace,' she added. 'That's what I feel.'

Caught in the Middle

Students at the University of Kashmir enjoy a campus with one of the most beautiful locations in the world. At Hazratbal on the outskirts of Srinagar, undergraduates strolling between classes gaze out on the tranquil blue-grey waters of Dal lake shimmering in the mountain sun. On the far shore, the hills sweep up majestically towards the sky. A short distance away, the creamy white marble of the Hazratbal shrine beckons. It is the home of Kashmir's most treasured religious relic, said to be a hair of the Prophet Mohammad. Every now and again, it is put on display to the faithful. At other times, it is carefully guarded. When the relic was found to be missing in the early 1960s, the entire Valley was in ferment until it was returned.

Hazratbal was once the power base of the Abdullah dynasty. The foremost Kashmiri leader of modern times, Sheikh Abdullah, the 'Lion of Kashmir', is buried nearby on the banks of the lake. He was laid to rest in 1982 as a Kashmiri nationalist hero. Hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris took part in the funeral procession. But within a few years, his grave had been defaced by separatists. As a result, Indian security forces now guard Sheikh Abdullah's burial site from Kashmiris who do not share his tolerance of Indian rule. In recent years, Hazratbal has also been a stronghold of more radical Kashmiri organisations. On my first visit to the Valley, I was taken to meet a spokesman for the then-underground Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, a pro-independence group that had substantial popular support in Srinagar. The secret venue turned out to be a small, dingy outhouse in the shadows of the Hazratbal shrine. The interview was unremarkable. But emerging into the daylight, I was taken aback to see what I took to be a uniformed Indian soldier casually strolling by. I was amazed at the boldness of the JKLF leader, meeting a conspicuously foreign journalist, TV crew in tow, under the noses of the enemy. Wasn't that, I enquired, a little rash? 'That's not an Indian soldier,' I was told. 'He's from the Jammu and Kashmir police.'

On closer inspection, the khaki uniform bore the initials of the local police force, and the officer sported the severely cropped beard commonplace among Kashmiris enrolled in the security forces. It was a useful early lesson in the complicated politics of Kashmir. A prominent figure in a proscribed separatist organisation which at that time advocated armed struggle against India felt entirely unthreatened by the presence of the locally recruited Indian police.

Most of the students I met on visits to the university would readily have swapped the breathtaking views from their hostels and lecture halls for a more humdrum setting that would allow routine academic activity. Venturing on to the campus during the most difficult years of the insurgency, young men and women would crowd around to voice complaints about the way in which security clampdowns, separatist-called strikes, military search operations in residence halls and informal curfews had cramped their student life. The university maintained an air of academic vitality in spite of the civil conflict all around. But there was also a sense of lives blighted and career options curtailed. One woman student complained that it was impossible to complete courses because the campus was so often closed for one reason or another. A young man described how every day after his lectures he returned to his parents' home, went to his room, and played music until bedtime. There was a common refrain among students on campus. They couldn't venture out after dark, there was no chance to meet up with friends, and they felt that the social life that is so important a part of any student environment had completely eluded them.

Over a cup of kahwa, the spiced Kashmiri saffron tea, one of the leading academics at the university chatted about the difficulties of keeping the all-pervading political tension at bay. He was a Kashmiri, and an expert on Kashmir's history. He did not wish to be interviewed, or to have his name used. That would only complicate an already difficult balancing act. But when I asked how long it was since Kashmiris ruled the Kashmir Valley, his answer was immediate and delivered with a tone of despair more eloquent than a commentary. 1586. For well over 400 years, the Kashmir Valley has been controlled in turn by Mughals, Afghans, Sikhs, Dogras and, since 1947, by Delhi. Underlying the sense of grievance of many Kashmiris is a feeling that they have never in modern times been allowed control of their own destiny. In the post-independence era, the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir has—for most of the time—had a Kashmiri Muslim as its chief minister. But the manner in which the national government in Delhi has undermined or ordered the dismissal of state

governments and connived in election rigging deprived Kashmiris of any sense of agency in their own administration.

Not all the outsiders who have ruled Kashmir have despoiled it. The Mughal era was in some ways a golden age for the Valley. It was a Mughal emperor who famously declared the Valley to be paradise. They valued Kashmir, visited the Valley and lavished attention on it. Successor empires were not always as well disposed. And the Kashmiri perception of 1586 as the beginning of their enslavement is in part a facet of a universal phenomenon, particularly evident in Kashmir—looking at the past through the prism of the present. The Mughal conquest meant bringing Kashmir into an empire ruled from Agra or Delhi, which in the recent anti-India climate is not likely to be looked on kindly.

The composite and accommodating culture of Kashmir, often known as kashmiriyat, pre-dates the Valley's role as an outpost of a succession of alien empires. At its core has been a gentle, mystical and humanist form of Islam influenced by Sufism. The term describes a Kashmiri identity which embraced both the Valley's Muslim majority and its high-caste Hindu minority, the pandits. The concept is often overstated, as if to evoke a political paradise before a biblical fall and the embroiling of the Valley in the rival nationalisms of India and Pakistan. The religious and class divisions between Kashmiri-speaking Hindus and Muslims were always clear-cut. The Kashmiri nationalist current that has proclaimed kashmiriyat as its standard has often turned to Islam rather than a more inclusive regionalism as its defining identity. And it seems the term kashmiriyat was never used before 1947—it was in part invented as a political rallying cry.[1] Yet its strength has come from a perception that Kashmir has been inclusive in its culture, and that both the Muslim majority and the vastly smaller and more privileged Hindu minority contributed to the language and the culture, respected and honoured the other community's religious festivals and practices, and so shared a Kashmiri identity which created a bond stronger than the differences of faith and belief.

These aspects of kashmiriyat have been pummelled and battered in the separatist insurgency that has raged since 1989. Many of the Kashmiri militant groups have promoted a more puritanical and doctrinaire form of Islam, at times explicitly renouncing the notion of kashmiriyat.[2] The shrine of Kashmir's most revered Sufi saint, Sheikh Nooruddin, was burnt down in 1995 as the Indian army tried to evict a large band of militants, many of them non-Kashmiris, who had taken over the village of Chrar-e-Sharif. Both sides blamed the other for the destruction. And there have

been periodical attempts, generally resisted by young Kashmiri women, to enforce the burqa or full veil.

The pandits never formed more than a small proportion, perhaps about 5 per cent, of Kashmir's population, but they were conspicuous in the professions and in administration. Until, that is, they moved out of the Valley. In 1990, by far the greater part of the Kashmir Valley's Hindu population left. Some went to refugee camps in Jammu and Delhi, while those with professional qualifications embarked on a new life and career elsewhere in India or beyond. Whether this was because the increasingly violent separatist insurgency had taken a communal form, or because the Indian governor of the state, Jagmohan, had encouraged an exodus of Hindus simply to give that impression, is still bitterly debated. A more recent series of massacres of Kashmiri Hindu villagers has almost cleansed the Valley of rural pandits. By the early years of the new millennium, there were at most a few thousand Kashmiri-speaking Hindus still living in the Valley where once their number would have been about 170,000.[3] Many of the Hindu temples in and around Srinagar have remained open, and the arduous mountain pilgrimage of the Amarnath yatra has continued to attract tens of thousands of Hindu devotees in spite of threats, and occasional attacks, by militant groups. But those pandits who remained in the Valley sometimes complained that the weddings and other celebrations that reinforce a sense of community no longer took place. They are isolated, somewhat fearful, and waiting for the day they hope for, but don't expect to see—when their fellow pandits return in strength to their Valley.

There is something quite distinct about the Kashmiri style of Islam. The traditional, tiered-style mosque architecture has more in common with Central Asia than with the cupolas of the grand mosques across the plains of north India and Pakistan. The service with its lilting, intoned prayers and responses, has a gentle, haunting air and aesthetic appeal which I've never found anywhere else. Both are evident at Srinagar's main mosque, the ancient Jama Masjid, dating in part to the fourteenth century, an awe-inspiring, cavernous building around a large courtyard, its roof held aloft by hundreds of tree-trunk pillars.

At Friday prayers there, another distinctly Kashmiri institution can be witnessed. Presiding at worship is the mirwaiz, Srinagar's hereditary chief priest. The incumbent, Umar Farooq, is a young man who has matured in his twin roles as one of the most prominent religious leaders in the Valley, and the best-known figure in the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, an umbrella group of organisations demanding self-determination. The

Hurriyat, though hobbled by divisions, walkouts and splits, and weakened by a wary reluctance to risk the outright hostility of the armed militants, has developed into the moderate, political wing of the separatist movement. Umar Farooq was still a teenager when he became the mirwaiz. His father was gunned down at his home in Srinagar in 1990—there are conflicting accounts about who was responsible. The mirwaiz dynasty has tended to the pro-Pakistan side of Kashmir's political spectrum. Nevertheless, the consensus in Srinagar is that pro-Pakistan militants were involved in the killing.

Language is another mainspring of local identity. Kashmiri is widely spoken, has a substantial canon of poetry, story and song, but remains little used in written form. It increasingly borrows a Persian-derived script similar to Urdu, but is otherwise quite distinct. Kashmiri has a low status. It has never been the language of administration or education, and the Kashmiri nationalist movement, though using Kashmiri as its medium at public meetings, has rarely made much of the language issue or indeed used Kashmiri in its own written propaganda. Urdu is the official language of the state. And not one of the many dailies published in Srinagar and Jammu is in Kashmiri. The Srinagar elite tends to discourage its youngsters from fluency in Kashmiri, preferring the more marketable languages of Urdu and English. With several million native speakers, the Kashmiri language is not in danger, but it is certainly not thriving.

Sofi Ghulam Mohammad's paper, the *Srinagar Times*, an Urdu language daily, claimed to be, at the time we met, the most widely circulated title in the Kashmir Valley. When I paid my first visit on Sofi-sahib, an avuncular and thoughtful man, the paper was closed. It had shut down because of threats issued by militant groups—the ninth such interruption because of intimidation by one side or the other in the course of seven years. There have been other such enforced closures, and indeed threats and attacks on the paper's editor, in subsequent years. Sofi Ghulam Mohammad's decades in public life have stretched from the peak of Sheikh Abdullah's popularity to the most turbulent years of the anti-India insurgency. Looking back on his youth, he told me that in Srinagar, there had once been widespread support for Sheikh Abdullah. Most Kashmiris had initially endorsed the Sheikh's support for accession to India. Half a century later, the outlook had changed. Sitting in his well-tended garden a short distance from Dal lake, he told me that most Kashmiris would like to live in an independent country, if only the two regional powers who covet Kashmir would respect their wishes. Indian rule had not been benign, and Pakistan's claim was in pursuit of self-interest.

'We have got Pakistan and Kashmir, two Muslim states. But both have a difference. We, the Kashmiri Muslims, have our own individuality. Our mode of prayer is different. Our mode of thinking, our colour, our costume, everything is different from Pakistan. And that is the misfortune of Pakistan. They have not been able to understand the Kashmiris. They never thought that the Kashmiri Muslim has got his own individuality and his own culture.' Rising to his theme, Sofi Ghulam Mohammad delivered a crisp and passionate encapsulation of Kashmir's distinctiveness. 'I have been to Calcutta, I have been to Kerala, I have been to Karachi. By my appearance they see that I have come from Kashmir. By hearing me only, they say: you have come from Kashmir. My mode of speaking Urdu is quite different. Culture and religion are two different things. Kashmiris are very proud of their culture. And Pakistan and India have not honoured that. They have tried to dominate and invade our culture. Both countries.'

The dynasty that ruled Kashmir until 1947 had just over a century in harness. Gulab Singh, a shrewd and ambitious Dogra prince based in the city of Jammu just north of the Punjab plains, bought the Kashmir Valley from the British in 1846. His neutrality in fighting between the British and the Sikh kingdom based in Lahore helped to decide the outcome. The Sikhs lost the war and with it the Kashmir Valley. Gulab Singh paid for it the eminently reasonable price of Rs 75 lakh (seven and a half million rupees). Kashmir's new ruling family were Hindu in religion, Dogra in custom and identity, and Dogri—which can crudely be described as the Jammu variant of Punjabi—in first language (though Persian was, at least initially, the language of the court). The new rulers were not, in any sense, Kashmiri. They were seen in the Valley as outsiders. But they were local, rather than remote, rulers. The princes became known as the maharajas of Kashmir, rather than the full official title of Jammu and Kashmir. The principality revolved around two axes, but while Jammu was home, the Kashmir Valley was the heart of their domain. As well as keeping its palace in Jammu, the royal family also made good use of the palace it acquired in Srinagar. The custom developed—and persists—of the durbar move, by which the court (or today, the senior apparatus of the state government) would be based in Srinagar in the summer and in Jammu during the winter.

The Dogra ruling family assembled, by inheritance and conquest—and with the goodwill of the British—a range of territories that had little in common beyond their maharaja. The Australian legal expert Sir Owen Dixon, leading a UN attempt at mediation, accurately reported to

the Security Council in 1950 that Jammu and Kashmir 'is not really a unit geographically, demographically or economically. It is an agglomeration of territories brought under the political power of one Maharaja. That is the unity it possesses.'[4] The cobbled together princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, as it existed prior to 1947, was 77 per cent Muslim. It consisted of five distinct areas. At its core was the Kashmir Valley, more then 90 per cent (now 98 per cent) Muslim—mainly Sunni, with Shia and Ahmadiyya minorities—and overwhelmingly Kashmiri-speaking. It's a big, flat-bottomed valley, eighty miles long and at places more than thirty miles wide, lying at an altitude of over 5,000 feet, and ringed by high snow-covered peaks. The land is fertile, with fruit, nuts, saffron and willow as well as subsistence crops, though whatever modest wealth Kashmiri cultivators have enjoyed is of recent date. Under the maharajas, and the taxes and feudal landholding system they upheld, the Kashmiri peasantry was both poor and politically marginalised.

The Kashmir Valley is traversed by the river Jhelum which runs through all the Valley's major towns before spilling down a ravine towards the plains of Pakistan Punjab. It has many other expanses of water such as Dal lake and Nageen lake in Srinagar and the much larger Wular lake nearby. These are home to hundreds of holiday houseboats and have helped give Kashmir its reputation as a landscape of bewitching beauty. Although Srinagar now has daily air links to Delhi, Mumbai and Jammu, Kashmir still feels geographically insulated from the rest of India. There are several mountain passes allowing access to the Valley—the most traversable being the route along the Jhelum river. The Jhelum Valley road, a formidable construction project hacking a highway out of a river gorge, took a decade to build. The opening of the stretch between Domel and Baramulla in 1890 made the Valley much more accessible to visitors and to Punjabi traders and greatly reduced Kashmir's political and intellectual isolation.[5] An English missionary who reached Srinagar by cart and boat just as the road was being completed remarked that there were until then no wheeled vehicles of any sort on the city's roads. On the other hand, the princely state was at the confluence of three great regions—Central Asia, South Asia, and the outposts of the Chinese empire. It was prized for its location as well as its natural beauty, and never so out-of-the-way as to escape the attention of expansionist armies.

Of the other areas under the maharaja's rule, the most important was the city and region of Jammu, to the south of the Valley and largely insulated from it by a formidable mountain range. Much of this was geographically and culturally a northern extension of the Punjab

plains. Before 1947, Jammu province had a three-to-two Muslim majority. The part of Jammu region now under Indian control (slightly smaller in population than the Kashmir Valley) has a distinct Hindu majority but a large Muslim minority. Only a few hill areas adjoining the Valley are Kashmiri-speaking. Jammu has resented its perceived status as the lesser part of Indian Kashmir. The bonds between Jammu and the Kashmir Valley are not exceptionally strong, and indeed in language, culture and religious identity, the cities of Jammu and Srinagar have little in common.

The third part of the former princely state now under Indian rule is the high-altitude and sparsely populated Ladakh area, with its barren mountain landscape. Ladakh is divided between roughly equal numbers of Buddhists in Leh and the adjoining mountain valleys—speaking a tongue that has more in common with Tibetan than with the other languages of the state—and of Shia Muslims around the small town of Kargil. Part of eastern Ladakh is under disputed Chinese administration. These three areas—the Kashmir Valley, Jammu region and Ladakh—constitute the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The part of the former princely state under Indian rule includes, then, all the Kashmir Valley, and both of the maharaja's seasonal capitals. It's difficult to avoid the observation that Pakistan has control over little more than the trimmings of the principality. Two regions of the former princely state are now under Pakistan's authority. The districts of Baltistan and Gilgit, high up in the western Himalayas, are now known as Pakistan's Northern Areas. They are vast, remote and sparsely populated, and are bisected by the Karakoram highway which leads from the plains of north Pakistan to China. The residents are largely Muslim, and speak a variety of languages, but not Kashmiri to any great extent. The distinct area of Azad (or 'Free') Jammu and Kashmir—what is commonly called Pakistan Kashmir—is a ribbon of territory lying to the west of India's Jammu province and continuing along the western and north-western edges of the Kashmir Valley. This is the area that slipped out of the maharaja's control in 1947, either as a result of local insurgency or of the tribal invasion, and was never retaken by Indian troops. It's not a cohesive area. There is no sensible way of travelling, for example, from the region's capital, Muzaffarabad, to another of its major towns, Mirpur, without going through the city of Rawalpindi in Punjab. To the Kashmiris of the Valley, the inhabitants of Pakistan Kashmir are culturally distinct. Apart from refugees from the Valley and their descendants, few in Pakistan Kashmir speak Kashmiri. But there's no doubt that the population of Azad Kashmir regards itself as Kashmiri, and feels deeply about the fate

of the Valley. So there are many Kashmirs—one within the other. By its narrowest definition, Kashmir means the Kashmir Valley with a population comfortably above five million. By its broadest definition, Kashmir extends to almost three times the population and to fourteen times the area to encompass all of what were once the maharaja's dominions.[6]

Both India and Pakistan continue to claim sovereignty over the entire former princely state. There is a certain unreality about this. India has no great desire to take control of what is now Pakistan-administered Kashmir, where there is hardly any non-Muslim minority and not the slightest sign of popular support for Indian rule. Similarly, while Pakistan might wish to have the Kashmir Valley, it can hardly have any appetite to rule over Hindu-majority Jammu and the Buddhist segment of Ladakh, which bridle under Srinagar's dominance and would be vastly more restless being administered from Islamabad. The various separatist groups, taking their tone from the public pronouncements of the two governments, also by-and-large argue that the former princely state is indivisible and should be allowed self-determination as one unit. Given the complex political demography of the region, this would be a high- risk strategy, but for the fact that there is no risk of any Indian government agreeing to a plebiscite on Kashmir's future.

There have been occasional rumblings about a re-partition of Kashmir. The attempts at international mediation in the immediate aftermath of India and Pakistan's first war over Kashmir looked at boiling down the former princely state into its main geopolitical constituents, and then giving each separate subregion some form of self-determination. If it had been pursued, this balkanisation of Kashmir might have worked. This option keeps forcing itself back on to the fringes of the agenda. Niaz Naik, Pakistan's informal intermediary in the brief window at the close of the 1990s when it seemed that both governments wished to settle the Kashmir issue, proposed dividing Kashmir along the line of the Chenab river. He has recounted the immediate response of his Indian counterpart—to ask Naik himself for a detailed map of Indian Kashmir. Niaz Naik insisted to me that India did not immediately rule out such a redivision. But that can only be because the Indian side never got as far as spreading out the map sheets. Pakistan's proposal would have deprived India of all of the Kashmir Valley and of much of the outlying areas of Jammu province.[7]

There are some curious anomalies concerning the issue of Kashmiri loyalty and identity. It's difficult to see why Kashmiri separatists should have any great attachment to boundaries established by a maharaja whose

legitimacy they would never have accepted. Yet several prominent separatists have gone to some trouble to seek to spread their message to non-Muslim areas, and have a strong sense of affinity with the entire former princely state. Similarly, the Kashmiri diaspora in Britain, the United States and elsewhere consists largely of migrants from Pakistan Kashmir, and particularly from the Mirpur region, who neither speak Kashmiri nor have any close association with the Kashmir Valley. Still, Kashmiris around the world evidently feel passionately about the fate of the Valley and its people, and have done much to sustain the separatist movement.

The Dogra maharajas made little effort to win over Kashmiri opinion. Valley Kashmiris were subject to high taxes, a punitive system of forced labour, and had virtually no say in the running of the princely state and next to no chance of getting senior posts in the administration. The maharaja's armed forces were closed to Valley Kashmiris of all religions, being the preserve particularly of communities with a stronger military tradition from Jammu and Poonch. 'Maharajah Hari Singh contributed no less than 60,000 first-class soldiers to fight for the Crown in the Second World War,' commented a wartime British representative in Kashmir, 'not a single one of them was a proper Kashmiri.'[8] The bureaucracy of the princely state consisted largely of Hindus, either Kashmiri pandits, or Dogras from the Jammu area, or—to the annoyance of both these groups—Punjabis from outside the state. The small professional and trading classes consisted disproportionately of Hindus, who also owned much of the most productive land. Muslims with education and ambition often felt constrained to leave the princely state, which is why Kashmiris who had settled in Punjab were of such importance in the initial political awakening.

It was only in the early 1930s that the first stirrings of Kashmiri Muslim political mobilisation became evident. The maharaja's initial response was repression, tempered by modest concessions. Public gatherings for political purposes and the publication of newspapers were permitted for the first time in 1932—after the report of a British-appointed commission set up to inquire into rising communal and political tension in Kashmir.[9] By the mid-1930s, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had emerged as the principal spokesman for the Valley Muslims. He was from a modest background, and graduated from Aligarh Muslim University in north India. He married Akbar Jahan, the daughter of Harry Nedou, who was in turn the son of Srinagar's Swiss-born top hotelier. From the late 1930s, Sheikh Abdullah developed a close personal friendship and political camaraderie with Jawaharlal Nehru, the foremost political leader

in the Indian National Congress who served as India's prime minister in its first seventeen years of independence. Nehru's family were Kashmiri pandits by origin, though they had moved from the Valley many generations earlier. The two Kashmiris, as they were sometimes described in the newspapers, shared a secular, distinctly left-wing and anti-feudal approach to nationalism. Those who met Sheikh Abdullah during his political heyday attest to his enormous charm, considerable presence and unquestioned charisma and authority—though his political wisdom was not always so evident. He was one of the commanding figures of the independence era in South Asia, and spent many years in detention, first in the maharaja's jails and then, after his friendship with Nehru soured, on India's orders.

Kashmiri Muslim politics had fragmented prior to the climax of the Indian nationalist movement. Sheikh Abdullah's party was initially known as the Muslim Conference. In 1939, anxious to avoid any association with communalism, he renamed the party as the National Conference, though it remained overwhelmingly Muslim in membership and continued often to mobilise its support through appeals to religious identity and symbolism. Its main goal was responsible government in Kashmir and an end to the excessive powers of the maharaja and his ministers. From 1944, the National Conference also championed a determinedly left-wing social and political programme, including far-reaching land redistribution (which was enacted under Sheikh Abdullah's auspices after accession to India). The trace of socialist ideology was also evident in the National Conference's choice of flag, a white plough on a red background. A smaller political grouping retained the name of the Muslim Conference, and worked increasingly in alliance with Mohammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan, and his party, the Muslim League.

The early and mid-1940s were a turbulent time in Kashmiri politics. The popularity of both Sheikh Abdullah and his party, the National Conference, was harmed by an increasingly close association with Congress, which was seen both as an outside force and as Hindu-dominated. In spite of this, the rival Muslim Conference was never able to douse down its own internal divisions or to enunciate a policy platform sufficiently attractive to eclipse other parties. Its areas of strength were in Jammu and Poonch much more than in the Kashmir Valley.

By the autumn of 1947, Sheikh Abdullah's party was the predominant political force, certainly among Valley Muslims. Both main Kashmiri parties, however, refused to be pinned down prior to Partition on the issue of which new dominion they wished Kashmir to join—a

reflection of the lasting uncertainty about the post-Raj dispensation, but still more of the hankering of many Kashmiris for autonomy. The Muslim Conference, in September 1946, stated that its goal was responsible government under the maharaja, without association with India or Pakistan (though the move attracted a lot of criticism from those within the party who wanted an unambiguous statement in support of Pakistan). The National Conference also sought responsible government, but it made explicit in its Quit Kashmir campaign of 1946 (an echo of the Congress's anti-British rule Quit India movement) that it wanted an end to the Dogra dynasty. Neither major political party in the Kashmir Valley made an issue of wanting to join either India or Pakistan prior to Britain's transfer of power.[10]

Even by the modest standards of India's main princely families, Hari Singh—who acceded as maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir in 1925—was an unimpressive ruler. A year before he came to the throne, he had become embroiled in a blackmail attempt after falling for the charms of a London bookmaker's wife. Although he gave evidence in a British court disguised under the pseudonym of 'Mr A', his indiscretion became public knowledge.[11] He came to power wishing to be an enlightened ruler, and to bring education to his subjects. It was perhaps unfortunate for him that his rule coincided with an upsurge in political mobilisation and with the emergence as a popular leader of Sheikh Abdullah, a much more accomplished politician. Even Hari Singh's son and would-be heir can find little evidence of political foresight in Kashmir's last maharaja. 'I remember sitting around the radio with my father, listening to the fact that the British had withdrawn,' recalled Dr Karan Singh, who became a substantial figure in Indian politics and public life. 'I have a hunch that my father never really believed that the British were going to go in that way. The old princely states were in some ways very insulated from the rest of India. One of the problems of feudalism is that you tend to get isolated.'

Sir Hari Singh's isolation was mitigated by the presence of a British Resident, a representative of the British crown who on occasion exercised great influence and authority, and by a British commander of his army. He had sufficient time and money to indulge his appetite for shooting and sport. He had a habit of becoming indisposed to sidestep any meeting that he might have found uncomfortable. And while he responded to petitions and demonstrations by introducing limited elections and moderating his autocracy, he—in common with most of India's maharajas—showed little sustained interest in developing representative political institutions.

Kashmir was the biggest and among the most populous of India's 560 or so princely states. These were not fully part of British India. This was to a large extent a useful fiction. The maharajas recognised the British crown as their paramount ruler, but retained nominal sovereignty and had very considerable control over their internal affairs. If necessary, London or Delhi could always pull the strings through the Resident, and on occasions deposed uncooperative or unredeemable rulers. With the end of the British Raj, and the granting of independence, the position of the princely states—with a total population approaching 90 million—was anomalous, and the last viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, only turned his attention to this issue late in the process of the British pull-out. The timetable for the transfer of power was made public early in June 1947. The Indian Independence Act was passed in the middle of the following month. This appeared to allow the princely states the option of independence, and left open the possibility that princely rulers surrounded on all sides by one nation could opt to join the other. Within a matter of days, Lord Mountbatten made clear to the Chamber of Princes that he expected them to accede either to India or to Pakistan, and to do so by 14 August, the eve of independence. This was a tough deadline—made all the more unrelenting by the fact that the award of the Boundary Commission about where exactly the new international frontier would run through the partitioned provinces of Punjab and Bengal was not announced until two days after independence. Lord Mountbatten also spelled out that while it was for the princely rulers to decide which nation to opt for, there were 'certain geographical compulsions which cannot be evaded'—in other words, there should be no pockets of Indian territory completely surrounded by Pakistan and vice versa.

Through a mixture of Lord Mountbatten's charm and steely persuasiveness, the well-oiled Indian machine for signing up princely states (there were many fewer in Pakistan's vicinity), and the sheer impracticality for almost all princely rulers of resisting the pull of Delhi or Karachi, the whole process went remarkably smoothly. A few of the states failed to accede to either India or Pakistan for a matter of weeks—in one or two cases, months—after the deadline. But besides Kashmir, only two other substantial princely states became embroiled in controversy over accession.

Both Junagadh in what is now Gujarat in western India and Hyderabad in the south were, in political terms, the mirror image of Kashmir. They had Muslim rulers governing a mainly Hindu population. Neither had a common border with Pakistan, though Junagadh had a

coastline that looked out towards Karachi. Junagadh signed an instrument of accession with Pakistan. Hyderabad's nizam opted for autonomy, indeed, he wanted to be a third dominion alongside India and Pakistan. Jinnah and his colleagues entertained hopes that Hyderabad, by far the most populous of the princely states, would remain outside the Indian Union, or at least would prove to be a sufficiently strong bargaining counter to give them leverage elsewhere, particularly over Kashmir. In the event, India swallowed up Junagadh a few weeks after independence, and took over Hyderabad in the following year, amid much fuss but little lasting political or diplomatic consequence.

Kashmir was the only state that had land borders with both India and Pakistan where the decision about accession was in any real doubt. Faced with a dilemma about which way to jump, Sir Hari Singh did what came naturally to him: he stalled for time. Kashmir sought what were called 'standstill' agreements with both India and Pakistan, so that services such as post and supplies of fuel would continue without interruption. India didn't conclude such an accord, but acted as if it had. The much more important arrangement from Kashmir's point of view, with Pakistan, was signed, but not fully honoured. The maharaja was repeatedly urged to prepare for the future. Lord Mountbatten travelled to Srinagar in June 1947. It's often suggested that the viceroy did Nehru's bidding in seeking to secure Kashmir's accession to India. Nehru had an enormously powerful attachment to Kashmir strengthened by his personal and political alliance with Sheikh Abdullah. He keenly wanted Kashmir to come to India. But although Mountbatten found Nehru much more convivial than the austere and lawyerly Jinnah, his main concern was that Kashmir's maharaja should make up his mind rather than letting things drift. As it turned out, the viceroy's trip to Kashmir was a waste of time. He had no substantial discussions with Sir Hari Singh, who first sent his guest off on a fishing trip and then sidestepped a meeting by saying he was unwell.

This was not simply indecisiveness. The maharaja had a dream of Kashmir as an Asian version of Switzerland, a neutral, independent mountain state enjoying the respect and friendship of its neighbours. He believed that Kashmir was of sufficient size and wealth to overcome the most obvious objection to independence—that an area so far from the coast, most of which was not easily accessible, would always be hostage to its more powerful neighbours. He cleaved to this notion of self-rule even as the storm clouds gathered. As late as mid-October 1947—two

months after the British pull-out and just ten days before the tribesmen entered Kashmir—the maharaja's deputy prime minister, R.L. Batra, was publicly touting the option of independence:

> We intend to keep on friendly relations with both Pakistan and the Indian Union. Despite constant rumours we have no intention of either joining India or Pakistan and the Maharaja and his Government have decided that no decision of any sort will be made until there is peace on the plains. . . .
>
> The population depends entirely on exports of wood[,] arts and crafts, also fruit and vegetables for its existence and in all our decisions we must think of this first. No one can lightly say that we will join the Indian Union, or as other wishful thinkers say, that we will join Pakistan.
>
> The situation is extremely difficult. Much of our trade in wood is done with the Indian Union but the river Jhelum which takes the wood down to the plains ends in Pakistan.
>
> The Maharaja has told me that his ambition is to make Kashmir the Switzerland of the East—a State that is completely neutral. As much of our living depends on visitors, we must think of them. Visitors will not come to a State which is beset with communal troubles. . . .
>
> I think this is the only possible future for the State. We are in an extremely important geographical position, as a glance of a map will show. Our borders touch six countries—India, Pakistan, Tibet, Russia, Afghanistan and Sinkiang.[12]

Kashmir's deputy prime minister also remarked in this news interview, a touch prophetically, that 'the only thing that will change this decision is if one side or the other decides to use force against us'. When Jinnah later complained that Kashmir's accession to India was part of a 'long intrigue', Mountbatten's response was to say: 'I knew that [the] Maharaja was most anxious to remain independent, and nothing but the terror of violence could have made him to accede to either Dominion.'[13]

In seeking a sovereign Kashmir, the maharaja did something remarkably rare for him—he gave voice to a popular sentiment among Valley Muslims. It's difficult to assess the level of support, then or now, for an independent Kashmir. The view of Major General H.L. Scott, briefing British diplomats in October 1947 at the close of eleven years as the maharaja's chief of staff, was that the 'vast majority of Kashmiris

have no strong bias for either India or Pakistan and prefer to remain independent of either Dominion and free to earn their living'.[14] The leading Kashmiri nationalist, Sheikh Abdullah—the man whose eventual support for accession to India was crucial—was greatly attracted to the idea of independence at various times in his career.[15] In more recent years, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front has been the most prominent separatist group advocating independence. It hasn't contested elections, and assessments of its popular support have to be based on anecdote and informal samples of opinion. It has certainly at times been substantial. The impression of many who know the Kashmir Valley well is that the idea of independence, however unrealistic, continues to have considerable popular appeal.

Pakistan's courting of Kashmir and of Kashmiri opinion at the time of the transfer of power was not always assiduous. The letter K in the part-acronym Pakistan stands for Kashmir. On the other hand, Kashmir was not as central to the Pakistan project as the Muslim areas of Punjab and Bengal, and so in the frenzied political activity that achieved the creation of Pakistan it was in some ways a marginal issue. The Muslim League seems to have believed, wrongly, that the larger princely states would retain autonomy. Jinnah certainly never imagined Kashmir becoming part of India, but nor did it appear central to his notion of Pakistan. More than that, the more Pakistan-minded of the political parties in Kashmir, the Muslim Conference, had limited grass-roots organisation in the Valley, and did not unambiguously support joining Pakistan until late in the accession crisis.

Mohammad Ali Jinnah visited the Kashmir Valley in the summer of 1944. He spent more than two months there. It's an indication of the complexities of Kashmiri public life and of the fluidity of regional politics in the period before Pakistan took firm shape, that Jinnah was invited to Srinagar by Sheikh Abdullah, routinely described as pro-India. Sheikh Abdullah hosted a mass meeting addressed by Jinnah in Srinagar, and was reported to have described the leader of the Muslim League as a 'beloved leader of the Muslims of India'.[16] Jinnah's mission in Kashmir was apparently to bring about a political reconciliation between the National Conference and the Muslim Conference. He was unsuccessful. Once Jinnah realised that there was no way of harnessing the two local parties, he made it clear that he wanted Kashmiris to show allegiance to the Muslim Conference. Indeed, towards the end of his stay in the Valley, some of Sheikh Abdullah's supporters sought to disrupt his public meetings. Jinnah didn't meet the maharaja, and appears not to have had

formal talks with any of his ministers. There were fitful attempts subsequently to win over Kashmiri opinion, and to establish a dialogue with the Kashmir state government and indeed with Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference, and at the time of the tribesmen's invasion Jinnah's personal assistant was in Srinagar. But as late as 11 July 1947, Jinnah was advising Kashmiri leaders of the Muslim Conference to advocate an independent Kashmir under the maharaja. It was only on 29 July, a little more than two weeks before the transfer of power, that Jinnah's Muslim League gave clear public expression to its wish that Kashmir should join Pakistan. Jinnah apparently was in the habit of saying that 'Kashmir will fall into our lap like a ripe fruit,' but he did little prior to independence to engineer that eventuality.[17] The Muslim League's, and later Pakistan's, diplomatic quietism could well have been a reflection of their assessment that the maharaja and most (but certainly not all) of his senior ministers had little inclination to discuss becoming part of Pakistan.

Yet Pakistan's sense of grievance over the Kashmir issue is intense. At its core, of course, is the issue of religion. Whatever the rubric of the Indian Independence Act, the logic of Partition was that adjoining Muslim majority areas should become part of a new and independent nation state. On that basis, Pakistan's claim to Kashmir was strong. The failure to honour the requirement in Mountbatten's acceptance of Kashmir's accession in late October, that the decision to join India be demonstrated to be 'in accordance with the wishes of the people of the State', has been seen in Pakistan as a deep and abiding injustice.

There is another aspect to Pakistan's case for Kashmir, one hardly spoken of in India—the geography of Kashmir. At the time of Partition, there was only one all-weather route into the Kashmir Valley. It ran from Rawalpindi (now the headquarters of the Pakistan army) through Baramulla and on to Srinagar, for much of the way hugging the Jhelum river. When the tribal raiders closed the road as they advanced towards the towns of Uri and Baramulla, they choked the route taken by Kashmir's trade, fuel, and telegram and postal services. The *Hindustan Times* was prompted to comment: 'The Valley of Kashmir is totally cut off from the rest of the world.'[18] There were other roads into the Valley, but all went through high mountain passes—the Banihal pass which had to be traversed on the road to Jammu was above 9,000 feet in altitude—and none was open all the year round.

If the Rawalpindi–Srinagar road were open today, the journey from Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, to the Kashmiri capital would probably take six or seven hours. For the sake of comparison, the road journey from Srinagar to Jammu takes up to eleven hours, through the Banihal

tunnel which was built in the 1950s. This road remains vulnerable to closure because of heavy snowfall and landslides during the winter. The Indian authorities have announced plans for a rail link to the Kashmir Valley, but while work has started there's no firm date for its completion. From the vantage point of Islamabad, Kashmir feels close at hand—from Delhi, it feels a long way away.

Prior to 1947, most travellers to Kashmir approached the princely state through what became Pakistan. There was no scheduled air service between Delhi and Srinagar. The landing strip at Srinagar, the only one in the Kashmir Valley, did not have a tarmac surface, and had no fuelling or servicing facilities. The most common way to travel was via Rawalpindi. Tourists travelled there by train, and then completed the journey to Kashmir by car or bus. When Nehru headed towards Srinagar in the summer of 1946 after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest, he flew to Rawalpindi, and then drove to Domel with the intention of travelling along the Jhelum Valley road. Even those who approached from the south, through Jammu and over the Banihal pass to Srinagar, would often have travelled through Lahore and Sialkot, both allocated at Partition to Pakistan. Those British expatriates in Srinagar who chose not to be evacuated by air as the tribesmen approached in late October, because the Royal Air Force could not accommodate their pets or their huge quantities of luggage, headed south by road to Jammu, and from there crossed the still permeable new boundary and ended up in Lahore. It was the obvious destination.

There was a road link from Indian Punjab through to Jammu and beyond, but it was not for the faint-hearted. The route, according to an Indian army officer involved in repulsing the raiders, was 'intersected by numerous bridgeless tributaries of the river Ravi and other minor streams, which had to be crossed by ferry or by using the fords over the shallower streams. Not surfaced with tarmac it powdered very quickly, while a shower of rain would make any attempt at speeding extremely dangerous as even light traffic caused severe rutting.' Another Indian military account gave a grim picture of the bottleneck caused by crossing the Ravi by ferry, with only two boats available that could, at the most, carry across one battalion and thirty jeeps in a day.[19] When the Indian military airlift into Kashmir started at dawn on 27 October, some troops, supplies and artillery were despatched by road to Srinagar. While the first planes reached Srinagar within a few hours, the armoured cars and Bren gun carriers arrived nine days later, on 5 November.

The Indian authorities had embarked on improving this road even before the tribal invasion. With the fate of Kashmir in the balance, the work was pursued at breakneck speed. Sheikh Abdullah visited Delhi

late in November to stress how crucial it was to establish a reliable road link—its 'strategic and trade importance as the main road linking India and the State cannot be underestimated'.[20] India's difficulties in establishing a secure road link would have been much greater but for one of the apparent inconsistencies in the Boundary Commission's delineation of the international border through Punjab, which has provoked enormous controversy. The commission assigned most of the Gurdaspur district of Punjab—an area with a slight Muslim majority—to India rather than to Pakistan. This permitted India access to the hazardous dirt road to Jammu and gave it control of the rail terminus at Pathankot. Without this award, the Indian authorities would have had no effective road link to Jammu and on to the Kashmir Valley. They would have faced a vastly bigger road-building emergency. And Pakistan's case for absorbing Kashmir would have been much stronger. There have been allegations from Pakistan that Lord Mountbatten improperly influenced the Boundary Commission to allocate most of Gurdaspur to India. The evidence suggests otherwise, though it seems that Mountbatten did intervene to adjust another section of the Punjab partition line, with no direct relevance to Kashmir, in India's favour.[21]

Having given full measure to the basis for Pakistan's claim to Kashmir, it's necessary to recap the fundamentals of India's case. There can be no doubt that under the British dispensation for deciding the fate of the princely states, the decision about accession rested with the maharaja. Hari Singh plumped for India, and the decision was his to make. Whether it should have been for princely rulers to consign their people to one nation or the other is not directly relevant. Nor do two controversies which will be discussed later in the book—whether the maharaja signed the instrument of accession before or after Indian soldiers arrived in Kashmir, and why India failed to honour the commitment it entered into to allow an internationally supervised plebiscite—change the basic fact that Kashmir's ruler decided that his principality should become part of India.

There is a powerful second string to India's claim on Kashmir. The most commanding Kashmiri Muslim politician of his generation, Sheikh Abdullah, supported accession to India. This may have been a pragmatic decision, made in a moment of crisis, but he took his supporters with him. In the absence of properly representative institutions, his choice could be said to be an indication of Kashmiri opinion. Without it, India's annexing of Kashmir would have felt much hollower. More than that, whatever the active support for the pro-Pakistan uprising in and around

Poonch, there was very limited local involvement in the fighting, as opposed to tacit support, in the Kashmir Valley. The arrival of the tribal lashkar did not prompt large numbers of Valley Muslims to pick up a rifle and join the forces of liberation. Quite the opposite, Sheikh Abdullah's party, the National Conference, had conspicuous success in drafting hundreds of volunteers in Srinagar to serve as a civil defence militia to resist the raiders. When the Indian troops arrived, and repulsed the invaders from the Kashmir Valley, they were often greeted as liberators. Given a choice between the maharaja's Dogra army, the rampaging tribal lashkar and the Indian army, many Valley Kashmiris would, in late October and early November 1947, have embraced the Indian option. When the first Indian troops arrived at Srinagar's airstrip on 27 October, they were not seen as an army of occupation. At least, not initially.

Taken separately, the Pakistani and Indian arguments for having sovereignty over the Kashmir Valley seem incontrovertible. How could Pakistan have been denied Kashmir, an area with a Muslim majority whose communication and economic links looked west, not east? How can its accession to India, carried out in accordance with the prescribed procedures and with the active consent of both its princely ruler and its most respected Muslim politician, be regarded as in any way illegitimate? But the claims are mutually exclusive. Hence the difficulty of resolving the Kashmir issue, and the agony the people of Kashmir have endured for much of the time since 1947. The people of the Kashmir Valley feel caught in the middle between two giant rival powers, for which the idea of having control of Kashmir has become a key aspect of their sense of identity. As I've heard time and again from the disenchanted citizens of Srinagar: 'They both want the land, but they don't want the people'.

For Pakistan, the claim to Kashmir has become central to how the nation sees itself. Generations of Pakistanis have grown up amid slogans demanding justice for Kashmir, have been asked to give money for the Kashmir cause, and have seen the army grow in political influence largely because of the Kashmir conflict and the resulting tension with India. Pakistan provides political sanctuary to Kashmiri separatist leaders and armed Kashmiri groups, and has at times done much more than that—it has trained, armed and organised men who are then sent over the line of control (the formal name given to the ceasefire line) to fight against Indian rule. Just as with the tribal lashkar of 1947, the impetus to fight arose of its own accord, but that has then been moulded and channelled (though never completely controlled) by the Pakistan army and the ISI, its intelligence service, and become a central part of its armoury against India.

On the other side of the border, the initial determination and active diplomacy to secure Kashmir's accession arose largely from Jawaharlal Nehru's own affinity with the Valley. He didn't go there all that often before independence—after his honeymoon in 1916, it was almost twenty-four years before he went there again—but he wrote to his daughter about how 'the little corner of India which is Kashmir draws us still both by its beauty and its old associations'. And he confided to Edwina Mountbatten that 'Kashmir affects me in a peculiar way; it is a kind of mild intoxification—like music sometimes or the company of a beloved person.'[22] He was adamant about ensuring that Kashmir remained a corner of India rather than Pakistan, not simply because of personal affiliation but also because of his keen political alliance with Sheikh Abdullah, whom he saw, rightly, as Kashmir's commanding political leader. Once India had taken control of Kashmir, the idea of relinquishing any part of it to its main adversary was anathema. Jammu and Kashmir is India's only Muslim majority state, and is valued as a symbol of Indian secularism. To accept that because of its majority religion, part of the state would be best outside India, would be to acknowledge that religion is a sufficient basis for national identity. Sheikh Abdullah made the point succinctly in the early 1950s: 'India will never concede the communal principle that simply because the majority in Kashmir are Muslims, they must be presumed to be in favour of Pakistan. If she does that, her whole fabric of secularism crashes to the ground.'[23] This argument still holds sway in Indian political debate. Whatever differences there might be about autonomy, or tackling human rights abuses, across the Indian political spectrum (outside Kashmir, that is) there's close to unanimity that India's sovereignty over Kashmir is not open to question.

In the ten weeks between the independence ceremonies for India and Pakistan in mid-August 1947 and the beginning of the tribal invasion, there was enormous turbulence in Kashmir. An insurgency took root in parts of the principality. The maharaja's security forces were widely accused, by commission or omission, of complicity in the large-scale killings of Jammu Muslims. Thousands, probably tens of thousands of Muslims, lost their lives. But as political passions rose, the most widely supported political figures were in the maharaja's jails. Sheikh Abdullah had been arrested in the summer of 1946 for leading the Quit Kashmir campaign aimed at driving out the Dogra monarchy. Farooq Abdullah has memories of visiting his father in detention at Badami Bagh in Srinagar, now the site of a massive Indian army base. Nehru also tried to visit him, but was initially prevented from entering the princely state, and then

detained at a guest-house in Uri and sent back. The leader of the other main Kashmiri party, Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas of the Muslim Conference, was also behind bars, having been arrested in the autumn of 1946.

For Pakistan in particular, the post-independence task of assembling an army, an administration and a national identity was enormous, and not helped by the animosity of its neighbour. Both new governments also had to deal with the communal carnage in Punjab, and the biggest mass migration outside wartime of the century. By October, the killings had largely subsided, but the population movement—which required considerable logistical and military support—was only just getting into its stride. Some Partition refugees, a small proportion but sufficient to infuse Kashmir with some of the tension of the time, used the Kashmir Valley as a corridor to pass through on their way between the two dominions. Thousands of Sikhs from Peshawar and elsewhere in the Frontier travelled through Kashmir, and there were suggestions that these refugees had deposited arms in gurdwaras, Sikh temples, in towns such as Muzaffarabad and Baramulla. Muslim refugees tended not to travel through the Kashmir Valley, but enormous numbers passed through Jammu district on their way to west Punjab. Indeed, many Jammu Muslims were among the refugees. In early October, *The Times* reported that of the four-and-a-half million Muslims in Indian East Punjab, almost all determined to move to Pakistan, only a little over one million had managed to cross the border. In the last week of October alone, more than 570,000 Muslim refugees were said to have crossed into Pakistani West Punjab, with 471,000 non-Muslims crossing in the other direction.[24]

To put it mildly, both Delhi and Karachi had more pressing concerns in the first few weeks of independence than the fate of the princely states. The tension provoked by the slaughter on the Punjab plains, and the charge and countercharge of official complicity in the killings or at least of supine inactivity in preventing them, greatly soured relations between the newly independent nations. By mid-September, at least one foreign correspondent in Delhi was picking up 'talk of war' with Pakistan.[25] By the time the Kashmir crisis erupted, the Indian and Pakistani governments were in the habit of thinking the worst of each other.

In as much as the issue of the princely states made the newspapers in the weeks after independence, the spotlight was on Hyderabad and Junagadh. But there were also important developments in Kashmir. While Pakistan was intermittently active in trying to woo Kashmir, Indian diplomacy was incessant, with Nehru devoting such considerable personal attention to the issue that it annoyed some of his senior colleagues. Nehru's

deputy Sardar Patel took on the task of seeking to win over the maharaja, who was suspicious of Congress and its alliance with Sheikh Abdullah. The dismissal by the maharaja in August of his Pakistan-leaning prime minister, and his eventual replacement by an Indian judge, was seen as a victory for Delhi.

Indian diplomacy also secured another big success in Kashmir. On 29 September 1947, the maharaja released Sheikh Abdullah after sixteen months of detention. Sheikh Abdullah did not make any grand pro-India declaration on gaining his freedom, indeed as late as 21 October, just hours before the tribal lashkar entered Kashmir, he was pleading for more time to think about which dominion to join.[26] But his journeys down to Delhi to confer with Nehru and other Congress leaders—the *Hindustan Times* of 17 October carried a front-page photograph of Nehru and Abdullah side-by-side—indicated where his allegiances lay. The Muslim League's daily newspaper *Dawn* pointedly remarked on the contrast between Sheikh Abdullah's resumption of political activity on the one hand, and on the other the continued detention of leaders of the rival Muslim Conference, the banning of some pro-Pakistan politicians from entering the princely state, and restrictions on Kashmiri publications and journalists seen as sympathetic to Pakistan.[27]

A grave problem confronting Kashmir was the unwillingness or inability of Pakistan to abide by the terms of the standstill agreement. The Kashmir government complained that supplies of fuel and of some foodstuffs were not reaching the state, and spoke of an economic blockade put in place by the West Punjab administration. The Pakistani authorities replied that the mass movement of population had thrown everything out of gear, but that this was not a deliberate breach of the agreement. It cited the concerns of Muslim truck drivers, some of whom were so alarmed by reports of repression by the maharaja's forces that they were refusing to enter Kashmir. The trucks heading north from Pakistan Punjab towards Kashmir skirted the area where the local rebellion against the maharaja was strongest, and there were many reports of reprisals by the state forces against local Muslims. The journalist Margaret Parton encountered Muslims fleeing from the maharaja's troops when she travelled up the main road from Rawalpindi in mid-October 1947. 'It appears,' in the judgement of one Pakistani historian, 'that the local administration of Rawalpindi on its own, or under pressure from Kashmiri leaders did not exert itself too much to ensure the continuance of supplies. But it was also true that, under the anarchic conditions prevailing in the territories

through which the route in the Valley passed, the truck drivers and traders were reluctant to face the peril to their lives and cargo.'[28]

The Times summed up the dilemma facing Kashmir, and the uncertainty about popular opinion in the princely state. Eric Britter, its correspondent in Delhi, was among the best-informed of the foreign correspondents based in Delhi—he was also the partner, and later the husband, of Margaret Parton. As yet, *The Times* commented, 'Kashmir has remained remote and silent in its mountain fastness':

> This backward State of more than 4,000,000 people, once the most popular playground in India, has lost its holiday atmosphere. Reports emanating from the capital are few; communications have been disrupted by the Punjab situation, but it is possible some form of censorship has been enforced. The Muslim newspaper *Kashmir Times* has ceased publication . . .
>
> The Maharaja has remained silent about the future of his State, but the recent release of Sheikh Abdullah . . . is significant. . . . The aims of the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah are basically dissimilar, but both are anti-Pakistan.
>
> The only other effective political organization is the Kashmir Muslim Conference Party, which until now has been numerically the weaker. However, it is possible that Sheikh Abdullah has lost ground during the past 16 months and the rallying cry 'Islamic India' may defeat him. If a plebiscite were held the simple Muslim hillman might well forget newly found political theories and allow the dictates of religious and communal prejudice to influence his vote.[29]

That's a far from universal opinion. One historian who has studied closely the political tides in the princely state in the 1940s tentatively concluded that 'the popular preference was for autonomy under the aegis of the Maharaja, rather than for accession to either of the two Dominions. Failing that . . . the odds are that most Kashmiris would have followed Sheikh Abdullah's lead and voted to join India.'[30] But by mid-October 1947, the air of crisis in Kashmir engendered by the disruption of trade and communication, and the Delhi-focussed diplomacy involving Sheikh Abdullah and the maharaja's prime minister and his deputy, suggested that a move was imminent to clarify Kashmir's constitutional status.

That is certainly how it seemed to those across the border in Pakistan. The Kashmir state government complained to Jinnah, Pakistan's Governor

General, in a telegram dated 18 October 1947, that with a virtual blockade by Pakistan and continuing armed infiltration, Kashmir 'would be justified in asking for friendly assistance to oppose trespass on its fundamental rights'. Two days later, Jinnah replied by telegram, accusing the maharaja of issuing what amounted to an ultimatum and asserting that 'the real aim of your Government's policy is to seek an opportunity to join the Indian Dominion through a coup d'etat by securing the intervention and assistance of that Dominion'.[31] Pakistan's perception that Kashmir was slipping out of its grasp and was poised to accede to India in turn influenced the timing and nature of the tribesmen's advance along the Jhelum Valley towards Baramulla and Srinagar.

'Wild Bearded Beasts'

Abdullah Muntazer came across as an earnest young man. He sported a full beard and wore the trademark Pathan cap, a loose, beige beret, which folds over like a pile of unleavened bread. He hailed from near Abbottabad in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province. When I met him in one of the more modest corners of Pakistan's smart, purpose-built capital Islamabad, he was a little shy, and initially suspicious of a questioning outsider. But it was his job to explain his organisation and what it stood for, and he did it well. Muntazer was at that time an information secretary of one of the most formidable militant groups fighting the Indian army in Kashmir—Lashkar-e-Toiba, the 'army of the pure'. Lashkar was the most prominent and effective of a fresh wave of armed groups that injected new energy into the Kashmir movement from the mid-to-late 1990s, at a time when India appeared to be getting the upper hand over some of the longer established militant groups.

Lashkar-e-Toiba, along with other armed groups such as Harkat-ul Ansar and Harkat's successor organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed introduced a religious ideology into the Kashmir conflict, and a much more daring style of military operation. In the early stages of the armed militancy, the Kashmiri cause was seen as political—the right of self-determination—though the religious aspect to the dispute was always apparent. Even Umar Farooq, Srinagar's Muslim chief priest and a prominent separatist, argued that the Kashmir issue was basically a political question. But groups such as Lashkar and Harkat insisted that their struggle was religious. It was a 'jihad' or holy war, a concept that had been rekindled among some strands within South Asian Islam during the 1980s through the American- and Pakistan-sponsored guerrilla campaign against the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan.

Many of the operations in the early years of Kashmir's armed separatist movement had been in the hit-and-run style. Militants would throw a grenade at an Indian security post, and quickly mingle with the

crowd. Or they would detonate a mine under a military vehicle, occasionally indulge in sniper fire or kill an alleged collaborator. Lashkar and Harkat brought some of the lessons of the Afghan conflict to Kashmir. Both organisations—though particularly Harkat-ul Ansar and its later incarnation, Jaish-e-Mohammed—had links with the Taliban and, while Taliban rule persisted, had camps inside Afghanistan. Both were much bolder than the established Kashmiri militant groups, tackling the Indian forces head-on. They staged attacks on military bases, at times getting inside, inflicting heavy casualties and then holding out for as long as they could. They on occasion targeted—and succeeded in infiltrating—the biggest Indian army base in the Kashmir Valley, the sprawling cantonment at Badami Bagh in Srinagar.

There's strong evidence that groups such as Lashkar, Harkat and Jaish were responsible for another new element of the conflict—the massacre of non-Muslim villagers in outlying parts of the Kashmir Valley and adjoining areas. They also took the conflict to the heart of India's power structure. In the weeks after the attacks of 11 September 2001, with the contours of South Asian diplomacy undergoing rapid change, the jihadi groups launched bloody operations against the Jammu and Kashmir state assembly building in Srinagar, and against the Indian Parliament building in Delhi. These head-on assaults were what amounted to suicide attacks—the militants involved clearly had little expectation of surviving. The Parliament attack, the most spectacular operation carried out by Kashmiri militants, brought India and Pakistan close to war. However forceful Islamabad's denial of involvement or prior knowledge, and whatever the uncertainty about which militant organisations had been responsible, the powerful perception in India was that groups based in Pakistan, and enjoying a level of official patronage there, had struck at the core of India's national identity and its secular and democratic form of governance. The furious response of the Indian political establishment, and of Indian public opinion, prompted the Americans to put pressure on Pakistan's military ruler to outlaw the jihadi groups. In January 2002—two years after my meeting with Abdullah Muntazer—President Musharraf proscribed Lashkar, Jaish, and similar-minded organisations. They continued to operate under other names, and managed to claw back some influence by their prominence in relief operations after the devastating earthquake in Pakistan Kashmir in October 2005, but they faced constraints on their fund-raising, recruiting and training.

'Our Islam teaches us to help oppressed nations like the Kashmiris,' Abdullah Muntazer told me. He had received military training in

Afghanistan and talked freely about the Lashkar-e-Toiba camps in the mountains of Azad Kashmir, the part of Kashmir under Pakistan's control. The Pakistani authorities deny that there are any separatist military camps on their territory, but groups such as Lashkar saw no need to maintain this fiction. Muntazer also spoke about his own active service in Indian Kashmir in 1995. 'In our guerrilla warfare training, we are taught how we will enter and how we will travel. That was a very difficult job for us. When I crossed the line of control [from Pakistan-controlled territory into the Indian side], it was 1 a.m. in the night, and we walked for [the] whole night. When we reached at the top of a mountain, we were very hungry. There was a Kashmiri man, we got food from him. That was a very delicious food at that time. That was a three-day journey.' Having made their way through the mountain passes into Indian Kashmir, evading the army patrols aimed at stopping just this sort of infiltration, Muntazer and his colleagues staged a series of ambushes, mine blasts and rocket attacks, using local Kashmiris as their guides. 'We went to help them. We are their guests there. The people in Kashmir, they have a very big respect for us. We are not Kashmiri. We don't know the tracks. We don't [know] the territory. They help us. They tell us how to get to that camp. In Kashmir, Indian forces have aggressed. And we went to stop their aggression. They are killers, and in every part of the world the punishment for killers [is] death.'

Abdullah Muntazer doesn't come from the Kashmir Valley. He doesn't speak Kashmiri—his mother tongue is Hindko, which has affinities with both Punjabi and Pashto. A hallmark of the jihadi-style militant groups is that only a minority of their cadres are Kashmiris. Many are Pathans, and probably more are Punjabis, Pakistan's dominant community. When I asked Muntazer why a non-Kashmiri should choose to fight for someone else's freedom, I expected the answer I had received from other militant leaders—a few cliches about pan-Islamic sentiment, an injustice to one Muslim is a grievance for all, that sort of thing. Instead, I got a much more intriguing reply. 'Our family background', he confided, 'is a jihadi background. During [the] war of '48, family members fought in the liberation of Kashmir. So I have a jihadi background. Kashmir is only four hours on [a] walking track from our village. There was a time when our whole village was empty of men in 1948. The whole village went to join the war against Indian forces in 1948. They were in [the] tribal forces. We joined in '48, and still I am fighting against the Hindu forces in Indian-held Kashmir.'[1] The emphasis Muntazer placed on this family and village history suggested that it provided, or reinforced, a

sense of legitimacy for his own role in fighting the Indian army. The tradition of the lashkar, the tribal army, is an enduring one, powerfully evident in 1947 but dating back much earlier. Lashkar-e-Toiba has positioned itself within this framework of an armed force, sanctioned by custom, and willing and eager to travel and to fight in the cause of Islam.

It was through Abdullah Muntazer that I got the opportunity to visit what was then Lashkar-e-Toiba's headquarters at Muridke on the outskirts of the Pakistani city of Lahore. I was shown round by Muntazer's boss, a burly and convivial man with a bushy, greying beard, who took the nom-de-guerre Yahya Mujahid. Muridke was impressive. It was described to me as an Islamic university, with several thousand male students. And that's what it appeared to be—recently built, in a greenfield site, with departments specialising in Arabic, English, computer studies and other disciplines. A campus shop sold audio cassettes of wailing, echoing songs glorifying the life of a mujahid, a religious freedom fighter. I bought a few. Outside the campus mosque, I met an elderly teacher of English, who told me with pride that many of his former students had been killed fighting in Kashmir. The authorities at Muridke kept a register of all alumni killed on service. At the time of my visit, I was told, more than 600 members of Lashkar had lost their lives, among them about forty Muridke students 'on vacation' in Indian Kashmir.

I was given free rein to walk around the site, to peer into rooms, and meander through courtyards. My attention was taken by a group of students, several in camouflage-style military fatigues, attending a lecture outside on the grass. The tone of the address seemed to be excited. Was this military training, I asked? No, no, I was told, they were being taught the skills of open-air religious preaching. Yahya Mujahid insisted that whatever instruction was provided in the camps in Pakistan Kashmir, there was nothing of a military nature at Muridke. Still, the popularity of camouflage jackets and trousers, which were on sale at stalls on the edge of the site, gave the campus something of the appearance of an army instruction centre.

My attempts, on a later visit, to get to a Lashkar-e-Toiba camp in Pakistan Kashmir were not as successful. A friend, one of Islamabad's most senior journalists, had warned me there was no way that the country's powerful military intelligence agency, the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), would allow a foreign reporter to visit military facilities in Pakistan Kashmir which did not officially exist. All the militant groups relied on the goodwill of the ISI, and on much more tangible support. Nevertheless, Lashkar seemed keen to show me around their office just outside the

small, sleepy town of Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan Kashmir. They said they were happy to discuss taking me to a training camp. We arranged a time when they would come to my Muzaffarabad hotel and escort me to their local headquarters. No one showed up. No one who picked up the phone in the local Lashkar office could explain why the appointment had not been kept, or when the rendezvous could be rearranged.

On our last morning in Muzaffarabad, after several days of unsatisfactory phone exchanges, we decided to head out on the road leading towards their office. It was more of a potholed cart track. But a roadside stall selling camouflage gear, and bedecked with garish stickers and posters graphically depicting the destruction of India, Israel and the United States, confirmed our sense of direction. Even more so did the presence of a young boy, probably in his mid-teens, lolling around by the side of the track, carrying an automatic weapon. We pressed on, but not much further. Our car was overtaken by a man on a motorbike. We were told to stop, and our pursuer—who was wearing a grey, loose-fitting Punjabi tunic rather than any style of uniform—identified himself as from the Special Branch. He told us to turn around right away. His tone did not brook discussion or dissent. We navigated an awkward about turn on the rutted track and retraced our route.

Kashmir is accustomed to outsiders fighting on its soil. The Pathans have taken their turn, along with just about every other dynasty in the region, in ruling the Kashmir Valley. The Durranis, Pathans from the area around Peshawar and stretching into what is now Afghanistan, controlled Kashmir through the second half of the eighteenth century. They were not the gentlest of rulers. 'Tales of religious persecution, devastation and rapine are still told in every household throughout the Valley of Kashmir,' one Kashmiri leader, Sardar Ibrahim Khan, averred, with perhaps a measure of licence.[2] The Kashmiris may not have taken to the Pathans, but the tribesmen certainly took to the Valley. 'From that time has come down that curious attachment which Pathans still feel today for this loveliest of lands,' in the judgement of Olaf Caroe, one-time colonial governor of the Frontier Province. The more easterly of the Pathan groups 'think of Kashmir as a mistress. Those who love her abide half-guiltily in the pleasures of her seduction, but in the very acknowledgement of her beauty their thoughts return to their own and more lawful home.'[3] This sentiment is reflected in a Pathan proverb: To every man his own country is Kashmir. Pathans and Kashmiris did not have a great deal in common, apart from Islam. Their languages are mutually unintelligible. Their cultures are very different, and, conspicuously, Valley Kashmiris do not

have a martial tradition. The Pathan tribes are from barren hills, while the Kashmir Valley is so broad and verdant that for many Kashmiris the mountains are a distant vista rather than their natural habitat.

In spite of the considerable distance between the tribal agencies bordering Afghanistan and the Jhelum Valley, the Pathan tribes have continued to feel an affinity with Kashmir. If vestigial memories of ruling Kashmir played a part in propelling the tribesmen towards Kashmir in 1947, a faint echo of that more recent incursion can still be heard in the Valley. 'Since 1948 the tribes have regularly demanded that they be allowed to return to Kashmir,' wrote one sympathetic observer of the Pathans and their culture. That sentiment has faded over time, inevitably. But, two generations after the invasion, it was still apparent—'when asked if the Kashmir struggle was all over, *pukhtunwali* [the Pathan code of conduct and values] came into play. No! They had lost ancestors there; the battle had not been won. They would have to go back.'[4] And in the years since that observation was written, some, such as Abdullah Muntazer, have indeed gone back.

The Pathans have their admirers among historians, colonial administrators, and experts on South Asia. But by and large, they have had a bad press. They are the majority community in Afghanistan, living in the south and east of the country, where they provided the main body of support for the Taliban movement. They are also the dominant community in Pakistan's NWFP, with its capital in Peshawar, and in the adjoining mountainous tribal agencies. The Pathans—also variously known as Pukhtuns, Pushtuns and Pakhtuns—are united by a language, by a code of honour which emphasises valour, hospitality and vengeance, and by a patriarchal lifestyle forged by living in some of the most rugged and inhospitable terrain in the region. Religion is another binding force. Their style of Islam is not by its nature fundamentalist, but it is deep-rooted, with a tradition of following local clerics, sometimes called pirs, who have often gained great political importance. Pathans are also divided by tribal and clan loyalties, and while at times they have served as a united fighting force, at others they have been pre-occupied with bitter rivalries both among tribes and within the tribe.

The Pathans have not always merited their reputation for violence, vendettas and unruliness. In the 1940s, the Frontier was the home of the khudai khidmatgar, a mass movement of non-violent nationalism.[5] The real strength of this tradition was among what are described as the 'settled' Pathan communities of the plains. The hill tribes, a minority among the Pathans but the most bellicose of their number, have long had a powerful

tradition of fighting, sometimes out of vendetta or political rivalry, and at other times in the cause of Islam. These tribes—tribe being used in the Frontier as a term of pride, and not at all of derision or contempt—and particularly the Mahsuds and Wazirs, gained a reputation during the colonial period as being the most unruly of Imperial subjects. They were regarded as prone to armed revolt, effective at it, and difficult and expensive to subdue. While the 'settled' areas of the Frontier became part of the Raj, the more remote mountain districts to the west were designated as tribal areas, and served as a buffer between British India and Afghanistan. The main affinity there was with the tribe or clan, and administration was through traditional tribal or clan leaders. Customary law, rather than coded law, was in force. And allowances were paid to tribal leaders to deter then from lawlessness. This remarkable autonomy, in essence a series of feudal fiefdoms policing their own social and criminal codes, continued into the independence era. The agencies were no-go areas for Pakistan's powerful armed forces, a long-standing arrangement that can have had few parallels anywhere in the world.[6] The Pakistan army withdrew from the tribal areas at independence—and, by and large, stayed away, until in the aftermath of 9/11, the search for remnants of the Taliban, and for the likes of Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar prompted the government to send troops into Waziristan and several other tribal agencies.

The capacity of the hill tribes to inflict heavy casualties and heavier humiliation on western-led armies stretches back almost two centuries. Initial British military adventures in Afghanistan from the late 1830s led to disgrace and defeat at the hands of the Afghans (and Pathans in particular). Several British men and women were captured, and in the captivity stories they wrote after their release established a tone of describing Afghans as barbarians who were wild, savage, cruel, primitive and treacherous.[7] The language had not changed much by the time of the Kashmir invasion a century later. *The Scarlet Sword*, H.E. Bates's novel based on the attack on the Baramulla convent, is in its way a latter-day captivity story, an account of how Europeans fared at the hands of Pathan attackers and hostage-takers. In its pages, the tribesmen are described as 'fanatics, terrific and ruthless fellows', perpetrators of rape and massacre. The first-hand accounts of the attack in the *Daily Express* variously described the attackers as 'loot-mad Pathans' and 'husky thugs' who were 'crazed with fighting'. The senior missionary priest, Fr Shanks—the newspaper reported—had denounced the tribesmen as 'great, wild, black beasts'. Among other western journalists who saw something of the raid or its aftermath, Robert Trumbull described a 'looting, murdering army

of fierce Pathan tribesmen' which 'swept through Kashmir like a plague', while Margaret Bourke-White wrote of 'wild Muslim nomads'. Canon Tyndale-Biscoe, Kashmir's most prominent Protestant missionary, unpiously referred to them as 'devils'.[8] 'Wild' was the word repeatedly used by survivors of the raid on the convent, among them Tom Dykes and Angela Aranha, both of whom lost parents in the attack.

Yet throughout all these stories of British captives of the Pathans, another strand is evident. Early captivity stories sometimes paid tribute to the Pathans' courage. The *Daily Express* reported with respect how injured Pathans endured surgery without anaesthetic and without complaint. Taking his cue from such journalism, H.E. Bates also found aspects of the Pathans' conduct worthy of admiration. And most arrestingly, both Tom Dykes and Angela Aranha recalled acts of personal kindness by the tribesmen. 'They were very kind to us. They loved little children,' Angela Aranha asserted of the men who had murdered her father. 'They wouldn't harm us in any way. And they knew that we were starving. And we had nothing to eat. And some of them even gave us apples to eat—I don't know where they got them from, but I remember that—that they were trying to be very friendly with the children.' These contrasting memories of the tribesmen from those who suffered most at their hands, on the one hand wild and terrorising and on the other kind and generous, are a reminder of the need to understand actions and behaviour and place them in context rather than simply to judge or castigate.

The Pathan lashkar proved a nuisance to the British from the time colonial India sought to absorb the hill tribes in the 1890s. Tens of thousands of soldiers in the British Indian army were preoccupied with keeping the rebellious tribes under loose control. The British colonial policy was, by and large, to curb the marauding tendencies of the hill tribes rather than to conquer and pacify them. But as late as the mid-1930s, Pathan tribes staged what amounted to the most serious armed revolt in India since the rebellion of 1857, pinning down tens of thousands of imperial troops.[9] The lashkar had always been most skilled at hill fighting. It usually relied on ambush and surprise attack, and avoided either set-piece battles or exposed positions on the plains. Although both tactics and strategy were often well-considered, the execution was frequently haphazard. And groups of fighters, often resistant to anything other than local command by people of authority within their community, at times decided to turn round when they had sufficient booty, or when they considered that the raid was running into trouble. 'The typical clash,' according to a Pakistani official who spent many years in Waziristan in

the heart of the tribal belt, 'is the short raid, usually at sunrise or sunset, culminating in the capture of the village or booty, like cattle.' The glory of taking part in the raid was much greater motivation than territorial conquest, with the result that 'all the major raids in the last hundred years from Waziristan, whether to Kabul or Kashmir, have been characterized by their blitzkreig nature, by their swift irresistible penetration and by the rapid inevitable disintegration of the lashkar (war party).'[10] Often fighters would simply head home without any attempt at coordination within the lashkar. This tribal democracy or indiscipline, as you will, in time of conflict meant that while the lashkar could be enormously effective in fighting a guerrilla war in home territory, it was less adept at fighting for any length of time away from home. The call of jihad could unite and motivate tribes, but generally not for all that long.

The weaknesses as well as the strengths of the lashkar were evident in the Frontier revolt just ten years before the Kashmir invasion. The tribesmen, mainly Wazirs, were fighting largely on home territory. Their locally produced rifles were effective. So too were their ambushes. But their military organisation was indifferent. According to a recent historian of the revolt, discipline and supply were perennial problems. 'Due to the voluntary nature of tribal warfare, the lashkars lost their best men first, providing the army with a stiff test at the start of a campaign, with disastrous consequences in the medium term. Tribal sub-units in a big lashkar did not trust each other to the same extent as troops in a regular force.'[11] As a result, it was difficult for the various different contingents within a lashkar to cooperate in a large-scale tactical movement.

This organisational weakness of the lashkar explains some of the traits evident in the Kashmir operation—the irregular ebb and flow of forces, the failure to advance rapidly, the sense of uncertainty about how to proceed once the tribesmen had made their way through the mountains to the broad Kashmir Valley, and the extraordinarily swift collapse of the lashkar after its encounters with well-dug-in Indian troops on the outskirts of Srinagar. On the other hand, the institution of the lashkar—and the similarly venerated concept of jihad—illustrates that no overarching conspiracy theory is required to explain why thousands of armed Pathans wished to descend on Kashmir. The tribes were quite able to stir themselves without instruction from government or politicians. All the same, it is necessary to enquire what prompted the Pathans to invade Kashmir in October 1947. And given that they were operating well beyond the Pathan homelands (for Abdullah Muntazer's forbears, Kashmir may have been just a few hours trek away, but most tribesmen

travelled upwards of 200 miles to reach Kashmir), the extent of Pakistan's support for the raiders needs to be assessed.

The late summer and autumn of 1947 was an enormously turbulent time across South Asia. The communal violence was most intense in Punjab, but it extended into the Frontier as well. Many Hindus and Sikhs in the city of Peshawar were killed or forced to leave. There was a similar, though much smaller, exodus from towns close to the tribal agencies, such as Tank. The reports of the killing of many tens of thousands of Muslims in Punjab circulated widely and quickly. The accounts of massacres, rapes, the ambush of caravans of refugees and slaughter of trainloads of migrants inevitably aroused powerful emotions. The maharaja of Kashmir had a poor reputation for the treatment of his Muslim subjects. The state's armed forces were alleged to have been involved in atrocities against Muslims in Jammu province. On top of that was the suspicion, intensified by the maharaja's delay in deciding which new dominion to join, that Kashmir was edging towards becoming part of India, even though its geography and Muslim majority pointed strongly towards accession to Pakistan.

The initial rising against the maharaja was indigenous and owed very little to tribal involvement. Poonch, part of the maharaja's state north-west of Jammu but outside the Kashmir Valley, had its own grievances, particularly about the erosion of local autonomy and the imposition of taxes. It also had, unusually in Jammu and Kashmir, a strong military tradition. The number of Poonchis, as the local residents were known, who had returned to the area having seen military service in the Second World War, has been put as high as 60,000—and it was one of the main recruiting areas for Kashmir's own armed forces.[12] An insurgency against the maharaja took root towards the end of August 1947. 'We started being on the ground from February 1947, as far back as that,' recalled Sardar Abdul Qayum Khan, one of the instigators of the Poonch revolt who went on to become the grand old man of Kashmiri politics in Pakistan. 'By August 1947, we had started mobilising ourselves and confining, trying to confine, the Dogra troops to certain pockets. In August, we started this armed revolt. On 23rd August, we declared an armed revolt. On 26th, we went into an exchange of fire with Dogra troops stationed there. And then it triggered off. By the end of September, we had quite a big chunk of territory, thus linking it with Punjab. I was the man who was managing the whole movement at that time from my own home district, from Poonch. At that time, it was the state army fighting the state people. There were no men from the Frontier at that time.' Richard Symonds, a relief worker who knew the Poonch area, reported that the revolt started when

a 'young zamindar [landowner], Abdul Qayyum [sic], with 4 companions and three rifles fled into the mountains and harrassed Dogra patrols . . . Qayyum owed his subsequent victories not so much to the brilliance of his military operations but to the indiscriminate reprisals of the Dogras.' Writing in December 1947, Symonds described the 'Azad Army' in Poonch as 'cheerful, though ill clad and ill armed, Probably 75% are ex-servicemen . . . Every day's march is preceded by prayers and discipline appears very fair for an unpaid guerilla [sic] army.' The fighters' motivation, he recorded, was not so much to join Pakistan as to get rid of the Dogra monarchy.[13]

Sardar Qayum has been one of the more interesting Kashmiri politicians in Pakistan. Azad Kashmir enjoys a lot of nominal autonomy, but is in fact closely controlled by the Pakistan government. Few Kashmir-based politicians have made much of a mark at national level. Sardar Qayum Khan, thoughtful and innovative, has proved an exception. He has served both as president and prime minister of Pakistan Kashmir. He has been willing to talk about possible solutions to the Kashmir issue other than simple accession to Pakistan, and his views have extended beyond demonising India and its armed forces. Indeed, he has acknowledged shortcomings in Pakistan's Kashmir policy dating back to 1947, and has mused publicly that the rule of maharaja, against which he took up arms, was a lesser evil than the violence that has gripped the Valley in recent years.[14]

As the Poonch insurgency developed, links were established with some politicians in Pakistan. This did not—Sardar Qayum Khan insisted—extend to military support from Pakistan. 'We had no contact with the government of Pakistan whatsoever, and it was the people along the border who helped us, purchasing the country-made rifles. And then, of course, soon after that we started relying on the captured arms and ammunition of the enemy troops.'

There are other claimants to the title of architect of the Poonch revolt, and instigator of the Azad Kashmir (Free Kashmir) movement. Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim Khan was a young lawyer from Rawalkot near Poonch who was working in Srinagar, where he was an influential figure in the more pro-Pakistan of the two main parties, the Muslim Conference. He slipped out of the state, based himself in Murree just across the border in Pakistan, and there—along with some officers who had deserted from the maharaja's army—claims to have made the decision 'to resort to arms', apparently in September 1947. He has described how basic arms and ammunition were collected, and sent over the Jhelum river into Kashmir in 'shinas', rafts built round inflated goat skins. Soldiers,

mainly war veterans, were recruited village by village, and became an effective force—though plagued by the lack of automatic weapons and acute communications difficulties.[15] Sardar Ibrahim Khan was named president of a provisional government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (curiously, the second such proclamation of a provisional government) in late October.

While the two Khans may have disagreed about who should get the credit for launching the insurgency against the maharaja, and who was in initial control, they were of one mind about the limitations of the tribesmen's involvement. Sardar Qayum Khan has been the more damning in his assessment. 'The movement suffered a great setback,' he told me, 'because they were uncontrollable people':

> What I did was, when they came to my sector, some of them, they were slightly more disciplined. I evacuated a whole village and asked them to stay there, and then put a guard round that village. I did not allow them to join the fight. But in the rest of the state, they did a lot of damage.
>
> The looting created a very bad impression among the Muslim community. They made no distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims. And even if the non-Muslims were looted, that was not the pattern we were following. Because of that indiscipline, no command from behind, no control—they went on looting. And when they were full, they went back. Nobody was commanding them. They moved on their own, absolutely on their own. Every tribe was being commanded by a tribal chief. The Mahsuds had their own command. The Wazirs had their own command. The Khattaks had their own command.
>
> Particularly the Wazirs and the Mahsuds were absolutely uncontrollable. I came into an exchange of fire with them at Muzaffarabad.
>
> They made an absolute blunder allowing a thing like this.

Displaying a touch more generosity, Sardar Ibrahim Khan conceded that the tribesmen were good fighters, but emphasised that their involvement had neither been sought nor expected by the Azad Kashmir leadership. 'When tribesmen did come to our aid their management became a difficult problem . . . . One could not expect them to fight and conquer, and then hold ground. This is where we made a terrific mistake. Tribesmen are a fluid element. They must have a professionally trained

force with them so that the ground covered may be held by such a force. When the tribal *Lashkar* retreated from Srinagar, we had no other troops to hold the territory evacuated by them.'[16]

One common feature in the recollections of those in positions of influence in Kashmir in 1947 is the offsetting of blame. 'If only they had listened,' is the common refrain—as much among Indian army commanders as among prominent pro-Pakistan Kashmiris. After all, the Kashmir crisis of 1947–48 ended in a way that few could relish. India failed to claim the entire princely state; Pakistan failed to gain control of any part of the Kashmir Valley; Kashmiri Muslims saw the banishment of their unpopular maharaja without gaining the full self-determination to which so many had aspired. Yet it is telling that two pioneering leaders of the armed pro-Pakistan movement in 1947 have chosen such outspoken epithets as 'absolute blunder' and 'terrific mistake' to describe the Pathan tribes' involvement in the insurgency against the maharaja.

From Pakistan's strategic point of view, the rebellion in Poonch served a useful purpose. It put military pressure on the maharaja, and in as much as the insurgents supported accession to Pakistan, which was generally the case, it was a useful reflection of the disenchantment of the maharaja's Muslim subjects and a warning of the possible consequences should he opt for India. It was not, however, the seed from which could germinate a fully-fledged revolt capable of capturing the princely state for Pakistan. While the armed movement spread beyond Poonch to neighbouring areas such as Mirpur, it had little potential to extend much further. The city of Jammu and surrounding areas, which was Dogra- and Hindu-majority, was the maharaja's heartland and largely immune to rebellion. And the Kashmir Valley was both remote from Poonch—not in terms of distance, but certainly of access—and culturally distinct. The people in and around Poonch largely spoke not Kashmiri but Punchhi or Pahari, sometimes described as hill dialects of Punjabi. And while the insurgency was formidable and deprived the Dogra dynasty of a great deal of territory, it certainly did not carry all before it. In the town of Poonch, which had a considerable Hindu population, a besieged garrison of the maharaja's forces, along with 20,000–40,000 refugees, held out until relieved finally by Indian troops in November 1948. The town today lies on India's side of the line of control.

Any considerable military threat to the Kashmir Valley would, given the quiescence of the Valley population, have to come from outside, and from along the Jhelum Valley road. Some of the tribesmen, keen to go on a jihad, were ready and willing to take on that role. There were acute

divisions between leaders of the hill Pathans. The Fakir of Ipi, the religious leader among the Wazirs who had led the 1936–37 revolt and who was regarded by the British as a formidable and almost demonic adversary, was not reconciled to the formation of Pakistan. He advised his followers not to go on jihad to Kashmir.[17] He had rivals among the Wazirs who took a different view. The Pir of Wana, 'a little-known spiritual leader until 1945 among the South Waziristan tribes but who has since gained prominence rivalling that of the Fakir of Ipi', offered the services of his followers 'for action jointly with Pakistan in this extremely critical hour in the history of Islam'. And he came to Peshawar to discuss with the provincial chief minister what form this action should take.[18] While in the provincial capital, the holy man—colloquially known as the Baghdadi Pir—gave an interview to Margaret Parton of the *New York Herald Tribune*. Wearing dark glasses, a red fez, and a bandolier over his grey Pathan pyjamas, the forty-year-old pir insisted that should Kashmir join India, 'he would lead an army of 1,000,000 tribesmen into Kashmir on a holy war':

> If we cannot march through Pakistan, we will march through the mountains of Chitral to the north,' he said. 'We will march with our rifles and our guns, and we will save our Moslem brothers from the whims of the Hindu maharaja.'
>
> Scaling down Pir's claims by 90 per cent, officials here [in Peshawar] are nevertheless worried. Most of them admit that on the slightest provocation the Pir of Wana or any other strong personality in the tribal areas of the Northwest Frontier Province could gather an army of 100,000 sharp-shooting tribesmen, well equipped by their own tribal gun factories.
>
> If Kashmir does elect to join India, officials here feel that provocation to the deeply religious tribesmen will be more than slight.[19]

There were plenty of strong personalities among tribal leaders with a similar viewpoint. The Pir of Manki Sharif was particularly influential in advocating jihad in Kashmir. He came to prominence as a young, local figurehead of Jinnah's Muslim League. In 1946–47, during which the League blossomed dramatically in the Frontier region from an almost marginal force to be the dominant local party, the pir was one of its outstanding provincial leaders. He played a conspicuous part in winning the Frontier for Pakistan in the referendum held shortly before

independence. The pir was known disparagingly to British officials as 'the Manki mullah', and had a religious following put at 200,000. But of all the tribal chiefs and religious leaders who urged the sending of a lashkar to Kashmir, he was the most influential, with a following that transcended tribal boundaries.[20]

Much of the lashkar was recruited through tribal leaders and local clerics of influence appealing to tribal loyalties, and the time-honoured customs of the lashkar and of jihad. The Pakistani authorities thus found themselves, within a few weeks of independence, with an uprising just across their border in a princely state that they aspired to control. It was being coordinated from their territory, and with a large number of their nationals, armed and strongly motivated, determined to assist in capturing Kashmir. The new nation's leaders were constrained in the support they could offer by the acute disarray in their armed forces, as both men and equipment from the old British Indian army were divided up between the two countries. The commander-in-chief of Pakistan's armed forces was a British general answerable not only to the government of Pakistan but also initially to the Supreme Commander, Field Marshal Claude Auchinleck, in Delhi. British officers were also prominent at senior levels in the Pakistan army, particularly as staff officers. So the natural caution of a new government not to trigger open conflict with a larger neighbour was compounded by the near impossibility of making any plans for deploying troops in or near Kashmir without that being immediately apparent to all. The option of turning the martial mood of the Pathan hill tribes to Pakistan's best interests in Kashmir was an obvious one to pursue. The Pakistani authorities have persistently denied that they gave substantial material help to the tribal invasion, and indeed have insisted that they did what they could to frustrate the incursion, but the evidence of published memoirs and in the archives points in the other direction.

Brigadier Akbar Khan was a graduate of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst outside London, where his time as a cadet overlapped with that of Tom Dykes. Both went on to serve in the Indian army, and both fought in Burma against the Japanese during the Second World War. In the autumn of 1947, Tom Dykes and his wife were killed at Baramulla by tribesmen owing allegiance to Akbar Khan. The journalist Andy Roth knew Akbar Khan at around this time—'a confident veteran' of the Indian army who 'detested the "brown Englishman" who was Pakistan's first P[rime] M[inister] and tamely accepted the terms of partition and took matters into his own hands'.[21] In the course of September 1947, Brigadier Akbar Khan, who was then director of weapons and equipment at the

headquarters of the Pakistan army, linked up with Sardar Ibrahim Khan and others in Murree. Akbar Khan appears to have taken it upon himself to assist the pro-Pakistan insurgency in Poonch. By his own account, Akbar Khan helped to secure 4,000 military rifles sanctioned for issue to the Punjab police (though it seems that many of these were siphoned off and replaced with inferior locally produced rifles before they reached the front line). He also retrieved a large consignment of old ammunition that had been condemned as unfit and was to be dumped at sea. Prompted by a senior figure in Jinnah's Muslim League, he drew up an ambitious plan for a three-pronged military operation—continuing the insurgency in Poonch, but also striking at the road leading south from Jammu towards India, and at the landing strip in Srinagar in the so far peaceful if tense Kashmir Valley.[22] He recalled being summoned to Lahore—this appears to have been on 12 September 1947—to meet the man he apparently despised, Pakistan's prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, and one of Punjab's leading political figures, Sirdar Shaukat Hyat Khan. The latter had apparently devised his own military plan for Kashmir, using two commanders, Zaman Kiani, who had served during the war in the Japan-allied Indian National Army, and more particularly Major Khurshid Anwar, who had held an army rank and had also been a commander in the Muslim League's own militia. This was informally endorsed at a meeting chaired by the prime minister and also attended by the country's finance minister—though the military strategy to be pursued was opaque. Shaukat Hyat Khan has been described by his nephew as an 'effete and vain-glorious figure, easily swayed by flattery . . . a chocolate-cream soldier', though he apparently had the sense to argue against the use of irregular forces in Kashmir. [23]

'The unpleasant truth, as I now see it,' Akbar Khan wrote many years later, during which he had risen to the rank of general and been jailed for four years in Pakistan's first big treason trial, 'was that there was complete ignorance about the business of anything in the nature of military operations.' And his misgivings intensified when it became clear that Khurshid Anwar on the military wing, and Shaukat Hyat Khan on the political side deeply distrusted each other.[24] Indeed, there was an element of the absurd about some aspects of the planning of the incursion. Shaukat Hyat Khan, perhaps not the most dispassionate of sources, related how the organisers of the invasion 'fixed a day in September as the "D" day but found Khurashid [sic] Anwar was missing. He had got married to a Muslim League worker in Peshawar and had disappeared on his honeymoon. This delayed the attack.' Such fiascos prompted one of Pakistan's

most eminent historians Hasan Zaheer to castigate the ringleaders of the incursion for 'incompetent and divided command' and 'ignorance of the logistics and operational requirements . . . . The politicians, unable to concentrate on essential details and impatient of professional advice, did not realize the seriousness of the undertaking that practically amounted to an invasion of a foreign land.'[25]

Whatever the auguries, Pakistan's political establishment was now deeply implicated in assisting the rising against the maharaja. At the same time—according to Shaukat Hyat Khan—it was ordered that this should remain 'an unofficial uprising'. The most obvious unofficial force at hand at that time was the tribal lashkar, but no decision appears to have been made at this stage to involve the Pathan tribes in an invasion of Kashmir. Indeed, several of those who attended the Lahore meeting later insisted that they were both taken by surprise by the lashkar that descended on Kashmir and disapproved of the idea. Shaukat Hyat Khan knew the tribesmen well. In the 1930s, he had fought against the Faqir of Ipi in Waziristan (so too had Akbar Khan, indeed one of the most remarkable features of the invasion force was that the Pakistanis most closely involved had first got to know the capability of tribal lashkars by fighting them). He intended to use only a small and select group of armed tribesmen in Kashmir, to maintain surprise and secrecy. He recalled that Khurshid Anwar had been 'banned' from enlisting Frontier tribesmen, but had disobeyed. 'Suddenly we got the news at Rawalpindi Headquarters [of the Pakistan army] that Khurshid Anwar had flouted my orders and worked up the Mahsud tribesmen of Waziristan to come to take part in an Islamic Jihad . . . . He also disobeyed the other order to keep away from the Pakistan Army . . . . This again did more damage than all the Indian army could have done.'[26]

The prospect of a tribal incursion had already alarmed Major-General Scott, who stood down as Maharaja Hari Singh's chief of staff at the end of September 1947. He briefed the British High Commission in Pakistan, with prophetic accuracy, that an 'invasion' by 'the fanatical tribes of Hazara and the Black Mountain[27] and the Muslims of Jhelum and Rawalpindi' was possible and that the Kashmir state forces 'could not effectively cope' with such an eventuality. At about the same time, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's founder and governor-general, was telling Robert Trumbull of the *New York Times* 'that he was doing his utmost to hold back Moslem tribesmen, who were demanding a holy war against the Hindus and Sikhs. He admitted that he was not sure he could restrain them overlong.'[28]

Word of this was also reaching Sir George Cunningham, a retired colonial official recently returned to Peshawar—at Jinnah's insistence—to resume his old job as governor of the North West Frontier Province. Cunningham's exceptionally revealing typescript diary in the British Library gives a powerful sense of the growing awareness that a lashkar was starting to gather, and to advance on Kashmir. On 23 September, he wrote: 'I have had offers from practically every tribe along the Frontier to be allowed to go and kill Sikhs in Eastern Punjab, and I think I would only have to hold up my little finger to get a *lashkar* of 40,000 or 50,000.' Two weeks later he recorded how the Pakistan government appeared 'to wink at very dangerous activities on the Kashmir border, allowing small parties of Muslims to infiltrate into Kashmir from this side'. A few days on, and there was hard evidence of a movement of armed tribesmen:

> October 13th.—GRACE[Y] told me just before lunch that there is a real move in HAZARA for *Jehad* against KASHMIR. They have been collecting rifles, and have made a definite plan of campaign, apparently for seizing the part of the main Jhelum Valley above DOMEL. I have warned everyone I could, including the Afridis and Mohmands, of the danger of taking part in anything like this, in case it leads to war between INDIA AND PAKISTAN.[29]

Cunningham's warning had little effect, for two days later he wrote: 'The Kashmir affair is boiling up. A Punjabi called KHURSHID ANWAR, something in the Muslim National Guard, is on the Hazara border organising what they call a three-pronged drive on Kashmir.' More than that, he discovered that the Muslim League provincial government was sending truckloads of petrol and flour to assist any lashkar, and the provincial chief minister Khan Abdul Qayum Khan—the man with whom the Pir of Wana had discussed the desirability of a jihad for Kashmir—privately declared that he was supportive towards armed Muslims going to Kashmir, though he agreed that the police and other arms of authority should not be embroiled in the operation.

The chief minister's public pronouncements varied from the restrained to little short of incitement. On the 23 October, with the lashkar well on its way, he declared: 'My people should refrain from entering that State. We have given strict orders to our officers to prevent any attempt at infiltration of men or arms from the NWFP into territories ruled by the Maharaja of Kashmir.' At the same time, his provincial government was

issuing statements about Muslim refugees from Kashmir 'bringing harrowing stories of the atrocities committed on them by the Kashmir State forces', which read as if preparing a case to justify intervention. And less than a week later, with Indian troops committed in Kashmir, his tone had changed: 'The Pathans are determined to die to the last man rather than allow the invasion of Kashmir [by India], which is a State with a Muslim majority and belongs to Pakistan as a matter of right.'[30]

There appears to be little doubt that the chief minister was centrally involved in encouraging the tribesmen to fight in Kashmir and in facilitating their journey. Many years later, Akbar Khan testified, somewhat sourly, to the political involvement in the inception of the invasion: 'In September 1947, when the Prime Minister launched the movement of the Kashmir struggle Khurshid Anwar was appointed Commander of the Northern Sector. Khurshid Anwar then went to Peshawar and with the apparent help of Khan Qayyum Khan [chief minister of the Frontier Province] raised the lashkar which assembled at Abbottabad and with which he entered Muzaffarabad.'[31] Khurshid Anwar knew the Frontier well. He had worked alongside the Pir of Manki Sharif in promoting the Muslim League's civil disobedience campaign in and around Peshawar in the spring and summer of 1947. There are suggestions that he was involved in encouraging the use of explosive for sabotage attacks. He also apparently organised a small underground movement, complete with a cyclostyled newspaper and clandestine wireless transmitter. 'I am told that the man is a complete adventurer,' was the verdict of a British diplomat in a memo written in the aftermath of the invasion. 'He is said to have got away with a good deal of loot during the brief disturbances in Peshawar City last September, and to have sent several lorry-loads home for himself from Kashmir.'[32] Perhaps not surprisingly, a man held by the British in low esteem had considerable appeal among the restless and disenchanted in the Frontier. Anwar 'was possessed of remarkable ingenuity and surrounded himself with an aura of mystique', in the view of one historian of the nationalist movement in the Frontier. 'Many youths were captivated by this romantic figure.'[33] Khurshid Anwar clearly had the contacts, the experience and the temperament to enlist a tribal lashkar that was already straining to embark on the Kashmir jihad.

One way or another, provincial authorities in the Frontier contrived to give the signal that they were supportive of an attack on Kashmir. And indeed without official assistance in the securing of fuel, trucks and buses—all of which were in short supply—it's difficult to see how

the tribesmen could have embarked on such a long journey. Frank Leeson, a British army officer who was commanding khassadars, the locally raised Frontier scouts in Waziristan, witnessed the exodus:

> The tribesmen of the North-west Frontier had been waiting for some such call, and here at last was the chance of a lifetime. For some it was a crusade; for others a chance for a scrap; for many, it must be admitted, an opportunity to pillage and loot with a clear conscience.
>
> They streamed down in busloads; Mohmands and Mahsuds, Afridis and Afghans; from Buner and Bajaur, Swat and South Waziristan, Khyber and Khost; the light of battle in their eyes, half-forgotten war-cries on their lips. The Wazirs for the most part held aloof, sore tempted though they were; the Faqir of Ipi forbade them to interfere. But from Bannu the lorries streamed north and east to Abbottabad and Rawalpindi loaded with Bannuchis, Afghans and renegade Wazirs.[34]

By early October 1947, Leeson and his colleagues were being kept busy trying to restrain marauding tribesmen. 'We were intercepting Mahsuds who were coming down through North Waziristan with the intention of sacking and pillaging in the plains generally. Quite a number of those Mahsuds were intending to go on to Kashmir. They felt there was a cause, I'm sure, but loot was also very much to the front of their minds.' He described to me the participants in the lashkar as 'typical tribesmen in these baggy trousers and shirts hanging outside with waistcoats, very roughly tied turbans or pugris as we called them, and their weapons were mainly the standard type of army rifle of that period, the Enfield or imitations of them'. It was only towards the end of October, travelling out at the end of his posting, that he realised the extent of the lashkar. 'We encountered huge crowds of people waiting for a tribal convoy which was expected, carrying tribesmen into Kashmir. And as we had the crescent and stars on the sides of our trucks, Scout trucks, they obviously thought that we were something to do with this, and they were throwing flowers at us . . . . They were carrying on pouring into Kashmir for weeks after the initial invasion, and of course they were not only going in up the Muzaffarabad road, but also directly across into the Poonch area.'[35]

A British diplomat based in Lahore also came across evidence of preparations for a tribal invasion. C.B. Duke, the acting deputy high commissioner in Lahore, reported to London that he had seen twenty burnt-down villages in the plains west of Jammu, along the river Chenab. He had no doubt that the local Muslim population had been targeted.

'This is a dangerous game for the Maharaja to play,' he averred, 'and is likely to lead to large scale disturbances in Kashmir and incursion by neighbouring Muslim tribesmen. There are said to be considerable numbers of these people already gathering on the borders of the State to the North and North West and even tribes as far off as the Afridis and Mahsuds from the North West Frontier are reported to be moving towards Kashmir, although the Government of the North West Frontier Province are doing their best to restrain them. It will be difficult to do so, however, if there is general disorder in Kashmir as that country has always been regarded by the lean and hungry tribesmen of the North West Frontier as a land flowing with milk and honey, and if to the temptation of loot is added the merit of assisting the oppressed Muslims the attraction will be well nigh irresistible.'[36]

Duke's misgivings were shared by Sir George Cunningham, who confided in his diary his increasing concern about the movement of armed tribesmen. On 20 October, he wrote: 'I am afraid the Kashmir situation is going to be a serious crisis. Heard this morning that 900 Mahsuds had left TANK in lorries for the Kashmir front. We tried to stop them at Kohat, but they had got through to the Punjab via Khushalgarh. About 200 Mohmands are also reported to have gone.' He reported the news by phone to Pakistan's prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan. In the following days, he had other exchanges—directly and indirectly—with Liaquat Ali Khan that throw light on the Pakistan government's attitude towards the invasion of Kashmir. On 23 October, with the lashkar causing devastation in the town of Muzaffarabad, Cunningham heard a radio broadcast by the prime minister in which he declared that Pakistan was strictly neutral over Kashmir:

> This was a pleasant little bit of comedy to start the day with! When my Chief Secretary telephoned late in the day to LIAQUAT's Secretary at Lahore to tell him of the incursion of our people into Kashmir, he only asked 2 questions: 'How many men have we there?' and 'Are they getting supplies all right?'

One of the most intriguing entries in Cunningham's diary came three days later when a key figure in Pakistan's leadership, Colonel Iskander Mirza—later his country's president—called on him at Peshawar, and revealed the extent of official complicity in the tribal attack:

> He told me all the underground history of the present campaign against KASHMIR, and brought apologies from [the prime minister]

> LIAQUAT ALI for not letting me know anything about it sooner. LIAQUAT had meant to come here last week and tell me about it personally but was prevented by his illness, which seems to be fairly serious heart trouble. Apparently JINNAH himself first heard of what was going on about 15 days ago, but said 'Don't tell me anything about it. My conscience must be clear.' ISKANDAR is positive that [Maharaja] HARI SINGH means to join INDIA as soon as his new road from Pathankot is made, which might be within 3 months. He had got a lot of Sikhs and Dogras into POONCH and JAMMU, and has been trying to shove Muslims into PAKISTAN in accordance with the general Indian strategy. It was decided apparently about a month ago that the POONCHIS should revolt and should be helped. ABDUL QAYUM [the Frontier chief minister] was in it from the beginning. B[ritish] O[fficer]s were kept out simply not to embarrass them.

Cunningham was well disposed towards the Pakistan government, which was after all his master. He is not a hostile source. His diary entry resolves any lingering doubt over the extent of the Pakistan government's involvement in the Poonch revolt and the tribal invasion of the Kashmir Valley. Both may have originated independently of the Pakistan authorities. But there was an actively pursued policy to promote and assist, first, an insurgency beyond Pakistan's boundaries, and then an invasion of a neighbouring state, in which the prime minister and a provincial chief minister were key figures, and of which the Governor General was aware. Pakistan was up to its eyeballs in the military challenge to Kashmir's maharaja, though unwilling openly to deploy its armed forces in the fight. In the telling words of one of the best recent histories of Pakistan, 'Liaquat Ali Khan thereby formulated a policy that has continued for fifty years: that Pakistan fights for Kashmir by proxy.'[37]

The incursion was well under way by the end of October when the *Observer* journalist Alan Moorehead (who had been in Srinagar a few days earlier), drove from Rawalpindi up to Peshawar and the Khyber Pass, to see how the tribesmen were being organized and deployed. 'Everywhere recruiting is going on,' he reported, 'and there is much excitement and enthusiasm at the success of the Moslems.'

> Each village regards it as a point of honour that they should be represented at the front. This is happening not only in tribal territory where Pakistan has no control but inside Pakistan itself.

> I went into one village factory where the men were not only making rifles by hand but artillery as well. In that same village they were preparing to receive the bodies of two of their young men who had fallen in Kashmir and who had been brought by lorry so that they could be buried in their native rocks of the Khyber Pass.
>
> This recovery of their dead is a strong emotional point with the tribesmen: and it inflames them further. These were Afridis. I am told that the Hazaras and several of the other tribes are equally roused.[38]

Moorehead confided to a British diplomat that he had gathered the impression that the tribesmen had been preparing for the incursion into Kashmir for quite a while, 'and had been organising among themselves in a series of tribal meetings. His impression was that they were completely out of control of everybody, with a sort of Council of War of tribal leaders established in Abbotabad' in Pakistan. Among senior members of the Kashmir government, the deputy prime minister R.L. Batra initially also held that the invaders had been impossible to restrain. 'The raiders are tribesmen who are out of the control of the Pakistan Government . . .' he declared—a telling comment from a politician whose sympathies lay with India.

Indian military sources have sometimes alleged that the tribal invasion of Kashmir was planned in detail by Pakistan more than two months in advance, with the knowledge and approval of the British officers commanding the Pakistan army. The most substantial supporting evidence is the memoirs of an Indian general, O.S. Kalkat, who in August 1947 was serving as a brigade major in the Frontier. He recounted opening a letter on 20 August addressed to his British commanding officer marked 'Top Secret'. It was a note from Pakistan's commander-in-chief, Frank Messervy, detailing plans for 'Operation Gulmarg'—'the plan for the invasion and capture of Kashmir. The "D" day for Operation Gulmarg was fixed as 22nd October [1947] on which date the various tribal Lashkars were to cross into Jammu and Kashmir territory.'[39] He went on to relate how he and his family were then put under informal house arrest in Pakistan, managed to escape, reached Delhi, and on 19 October informed senior Indian military officers about the planned invasion. 'They thought I was fibbing in a big way,' he recorded, but they were forced to reconsider when the invasion occurred just as planned. His memoirs include a reconstitution of the Operation Gulmarg memo from memory. This

account has been recycled in several Indian military histories, but with very little further supporting evidence.[40] It seems highly improbable. At this stage in the operation, not even Akbar Khan's initial, flimsy plans for an invasion had been consigned to paper. The raising of the tribal lashkar was too far in the future to permit the drawing up of any sort of timetable. And it is very difficult to imagine any senior British officer in Pakistan putting his name to a plan for the invasion of a neighbouring state, when that was clearly in contravention of British government policy and prejudicial to Britain's desire for a peaceful and orderly transfer of power.

A close to impenetrable fog of conflicting dates and detail continues to envelop the October 1947 invasion of Kashmir. The basic sequence of events can be pieced together and the broad contours of the lashkar's progress and subsequent retreat are clear. But much else remains opaque. Most of those who wrote first-hand about the Kashmir invasion had an axe to grind, and a fair amount of the writing by historians and political scientists has been to some extent partisan. When the battle for Kashmir is still being waged so bitterly, it is hardly surprising that a whiff of grapeshot can be detected in much of the scholarship about the subject.

Khurshid Anwar, the man who can best be described as the military commander of the invasion of the Kashmir Valley, said that D-day had been fixed for Tuesday, 21 October, but had to be delayed until the following morning. He later told the Muslim League daily *Dawn* that he had 4,000 men at his disposal, and faced no stiff opposition until well inside Kashmiri territory.[41] This tallies with the account of Sir George Cunningham at the governor's residence in Peshawar. He recorded his first intimation that the tribal force had crossed the border into Kashmir in his diary entry for 22 October:

> Heard this morning that several thousand armed people, tribesmen and otherwise, had gone over from Hazara into Kashmir and had seized Muzaffarabad and Domel. We shall soon see what the reaction of Kashmir and India is going to be to this. I fear it may be very serious. My own position is not too easy: if I give my support to the movement, thousands more will flock to it, and there may be a big invasion; if I resist it, I have to bear the brunt if the movement fails through lack of support.

Domel was the first town of any consequence that the tribesmen came to as they advanced into Kashmir along the main road leading from Punjab. In it is located an important bridge across the Jhelum river. Immediately

adjoining it, at the confluence of the Jhelum and Neelum rivers, was the larger town of Muzaffarabad which, while Muslim-majority, had at that time a large and prosperous Sikh community and a sizeable Hindu population—both of which have since disappeared almost without trace. Many Hindus and Sikhs fled before the tribesmen entered the town. Some who remained were prepared to put up a fight. A British diplomat who travelled on what he believed to be the last bus to get through from Rawalpindi to Srinagar before the invasion, just a few hours before the tribesmen moved in, saw in the Muzaffarabad area 'many groups of middle-aged Sikhs, many of them carrying rifles of various kinds'. He reported hearing that the Kashmir state government has sought to organise and arm local Sikhs while prohibiting Muslims from carrying any sort of weapons, 'even small knives'.[42]

The invasion started in the hours of darkness. Krishna Mehta was the Hindu wife of Muzaffarabad's newly appointed district commissioner. 'I woke up with a start at about five in the morning [of 22 October] and heard loud reports of firing reverberate against the hills,' she wrote in a powerful personal memoir of the attack and its aftermath. 'With my children I went out to the verandah and looked in the direction from which the bullets came. I could see no one but the firing continued uninterrupted. Some bullets tore through the planks of the fence and fell inside the bungalow . . . The enemy had already crossed the Krishna Ganga bridge and was now approaching the city.'[43] The looting was evident from the start. Akbar Khan, one of the architects of the invasion, reminisced many years later with startling candour that the tribesmen had been promised booty as their reward for fighting in Kashmir. 'It was part of their agreement with Major Khurshid Anwar of the Muslim League National Guards who was their leader that they would loot non-Muslims. They had no other remuneration.'[44]

The Kashmir state forces put up limited resistance—hampered by the desertion of a large proportion of the Muslims in their ranks, many of them from Poonch. Sikhs and Hindus were killed in large numbers. A number of women were raped and abducted. And Krishna Mehta recorded that several Hindu women threw themselves and their children into the river to escape assault, asserting that on one occasion she witnessed such suicides. Some British nationals, including two off-duty army officers, were caught up in the initial violence. A subsequent report by a British diplomat stated that the tribal raiders 'were said to be operating in gangs under leaders who were not tribesmen and who in fact had no control over the tribesmen. It was suggested and has since been corroborated

that these leaders were in many cases Muslim League volunteers from the North West Frontier Province and parts of West Punjab.'[45]

Sir George Cunningham tracked the rapid advance of the lashkar in his diary with almost proprietorial interest. 'The invasion of Kashmir seems to progress,' reads his entry for 24 October. 'Some of our tribesmen were reported at GARHI yesterday, and seem to be moving up in the Srinagar direction. I think we have about 2000 trans-border tribesmen, a mixed lot (who have gone through surreptitiously by night in small parties) and probably 2000 Hazarawals. There are many thousands more from West Punjab, but probably not so well armed.' The following day he recorded hearing that the tribesmen had reached Uri, and later in the day that they were closing in on Baramulla. 'I am greatly surprised at the absence of opposition against them so far.' The invaders faced some resistance from the maharaja's forces, but it wasn't a spirited fight. The tribesmen must initially have thought that they might be able to achieve what some had apparently set as their goal—to celebrate the Muslim festival of Eid in the Kashmir capital, Srinagar. The city was about one hundred miles distant from Muzaffarabad, and Eid fell on 26 October, so that would have required a remarkably speedy advance along the gorge part of the Jhelum Valley road where, because of the mountain terrain, even modest opposition could cause long delays.

According to Indian accounts, the new chief of staff of the Kashmir state forces, Brigadier Rajinder Singh, headed out from Srinagar with some 200 men as soon as he heard of the incursion. At Uri, a mountain town on the Jhelum Valley road roughly equidistant from Baramulla and Muzaffarabad, he prepared to blow up a key bridge. And as the raiders advanced in force on 23 October, that's what he did.[46] Tagging on with the state troops was the ever resourceful Sydney Smith of the *Daily Express*, apparently the first journalist to get to the scene of the fighting. He sent a vivid report back to his news desk:

> With Sir Hari's Chief of Staff, Brigadier Rajendra [sic] Singh, I looked across the crumpled wreckage of Urie's [sic] iron bridge while mountain troops blazed away at the raiders storming a 4,500 ft. pass to capture the town.
>
> The tribesmen covered the last three miles to the town in one hour of non-stop gunfire, which rolled away then came rumbling back from 10,000 ft. snow-capped peaks.
>
> Houses on the route of their advance went up in flames, and thick black smoke blanketed the Valley. The raiders mopped

> up any Sikhs and Hindus who stayed behind in a desperate attempt to shoot it out.
>
> Then the firing died as looting began. Through field-glasses I watched mobs of black-turbaned and blanketed figures rushing through Urie's bazaar street. Brigadier Rajendra Singh sent his men back in five lorries.
>
> The raiders went on shooting up the town for three hours. When darkness came they sent out pickets and snipers on the flanking hills around the town. The little force of troops found cover difficult.
>
> Driving without headlights and with guns blazing wildly, roughly in the direction of the enemy, they tore away down the narrow, moonlit, mountain road.
>
> All the road back to Srinagar is now littered with refugees, Moslems as well as Sikhs and Hindus. Most villages are abandoned. Police and officials have quit two towns between Urie and Srinagar.[47]

The blowing up of the bridge slowed the advance of the tribal lashkar. The Kashmiri troops managed to impede the invaders through a series of staged withdrawals. But this was nothing more than a delaying action. The tribesmen pressed on beyond Uri, and on 25 October reached Mahura, the site of the hydroelectric plant which supplied Srinagar's power. The Kashmir capital was plunged into darkness, prompting the maharaja and many of his retainers to abandon the city and head south to Jammu.

Just as the civil administration of the princely state was beginning to disintegrate, so too were the last front-line remnants of its army. Brigadier Rajinder Singh, whose rearguard action had slowed the lashkar's advance, was killed in the aftermath of the capture of Mahura. The maharaja's army had already suffered defections, and a large part of its fighting force was deployed in and around Poonch tackling the initial insurgency (the *Statesman*, one of India's better-informed newspapers, commented of the Poonch rebellion that 'there could have been no better plan for securing a dispersal of the State's forces'). The loss of its new chief of staff, compounding the low morale of officers and troops, just about marked the end of the maharaja's army as an effective fighting force.

The raiders had the Kashmir Valley in front of them. As they approached Baramulla, they were on the threshold of the largest and most prosperous Kashmiri town they had so far reached. The prospect for loot was considerable. They were also on the doorstep of the first sizeable community of Europeans they had come across—the nuns and priests at St Joseph's convent, college and mission hospital, and a small

expatriate community. As at Muzaffarabad, they were to encounter a considerable local Sikh and Hindu community. Above all, the road to Srinagar lay open ahead of them. As the Valley moved from gorge to something more like a plain, they were no longer battling along a mountain road. They could move much more freely. But the change of terrain brought problems as well as opportunities for the tribal lashkar. They were leaving the protection of the hills, the landscape they understood and that favoured their ambush-based style of attack, and entering a much more exposed military environment.

The Mission

From the calm, cloistered setting of St Joseph's College on the northern-most reaches of London, the Mill Hill missionaries sent young men across the world to spread Christ's message. In one of its echoing corridors, there was what a Mill Hill veteran Father Gerry Dunne cheerfully described to me as a rogues' gallery of photographs, hundreds of small, cropped, black-and-white mugshots of priests about to embark on their life's mission. He could name most of them and knew many of them. Among the crowded display boards were photos of George Shanks and Gerry Mallett, the two Catholic priests at Baramulla at the time the raiders struck. Mallett, the younger of the two men, bore a thoughtful, almost ascetic, countenance. Shanks had a more debonair demeanour, with a hint of a Presley-style quiff, and a well-set, muscular face. Father Dunne knew George Shanks's family in Tyneside in north-east England and their paths crossed when Shanks was newly ordained. 'He was a quiet kind of fellow. He wasn't boisterous, but very sharp and very witty. He wasn't a zealot in the sense that he got himself into a lather, but he worked hard. He had a good head on him.' He was a strong swimmer, a keen motorbiker and a pianist with a repertoire that was popular rather than ecclesiastical, stretching from Gilbert and Sullivan to the old Geordie anthem, the Blaydon Races.

Gerry Dunne and George Shanks headed in different directions from Mill Hill and its seminaries. Father Dunne spent most of his working life in Borneo, Uganda and Qatar. Father Shanks was posted initially to Punjab, perhaps not the best use of his degree in French—he wrote to the order's superior general to thank him 'very sincerely' for this first appointment 'which is all the more pleasing to me on account of its unexpectedness'—and then on to Kashmir. After walking me down Mill Hill's portrait gallery, Father Dunne took me outside, to a small cemetery lying in the shadow of the college. Monsignor Shanks (who climbed the clerical hierarchy to become, in 1952, the church's first prefect apostolic

of Jammu and Kashmir) is buried there. He died of lung disease in London in December 1962, a few months after returning from India, at the age of 53. He had been determined to return to India to die, but the London winter smog claimed him. Father Mallett died of heatstroke on a scouting trip in Pakistan in 1970.[1] They had both arrived in Baramulla to supplement the teaching staff of St Joseph's College in the late 1930s. George Shanks was the first graduate priest to join the college faculty, and oversaw the awarding of degree status to St Joseph's. In 1947, he was the college principal. The two priests would have known each other with the ease and intimacy that comes with almost a decade's joint endeavour, without the distraction of family, in a remote location.

As Father Dunne reminisced to me about the two men, and about the many ordeals Mill Hill missionaries had encountered in some of the world's most unpromising territories for their Christian message, he recounted a tale that had become part of Mill Hill's folklore. 'At the time of the siege [at Baramulla] when things were looking pretty bad, the two of them were together,' said Father Dunne, with the air of an accomplished storyteller. 'It was Gerry Mallett who said: we may not come through this, so what about going to confession. And George Shanks said: that's a very good idea. So George made his confession to Gerry Mallett, and Gerry Mallett gave him absolution. And then Gerry Mallett said: right, give me a little time. And eventually he confessed, and then George Shanks absolved him. And then when it was all over, or at least when the danger had receded, Gerry Mallett said: I'm glad nothing happened. And George Shanks said: why? Well, he said, when you gave me absolution, you said the grace after meals.' It's a story with an apocryphal air to it, but one which has echoed around Mill Hill common rooms and across far-flung clerical outposts for generations.

Through Mill Hill, I made contact with George Shanks's last surviving sibling, Maureen Corboy, aged almost ninety, living in Cornwall, and only too keen to honour the memory of a much loved brother. 'He was a nice laddie. He was very ordinary, but he was very well liked. He was kind. He was considerate.' In an act of enormous generosity, she parcelled up all her letters and photographs from her brother, and sent them to me. She was about to have a cataract operation. 'Keep all this for as long as you wish,' she wrote on the outside of the package, 'if I don't survive the anaesthetic dump them on Mill Hill.'

The remarkable cache of photographs, letters, prayer cards and newspaper cuttings Maureen posted to me fill out a picture of a missionary with a keen sense of fun, clouded by a somewhat anxious temperament.

There are photographs of George swimming in the river Jhelum, astride a motorcycle, and trying out new clerical vestments.[2] Among the items is an airmail letter that George had written from Baramulla to another of his sisters a month before the tribesmen's invasion:

> Whether this will ever reach you is problematic these days—Pakistan and India are too busy knocking one another's heads off to bother about postal services at the moment. My home mail came fairly regularly until about a week ago, but nothing since then. And mail from outside Kashmir seems to have stopped completely. The denizens of Pakistan are sitting down in armed mobs on the Rawalpindi road + stopping all supplies from entering Kashmir—nobody but a Mohammedan or a European can travel these days. Meanwhile, our Maharajah still goes on sitting on the fence, so we are peaceful enough up to now, but there is a certain amount of tension in the air, + we may have a spot of bother at any moment. However, if it comes, it will be purely a domestic row between the two parties, and there is no danger for us. So if you do see Kashmir mentioned in the news, there will be no cause for alarm.[3]

It was much more than a 'spot of bother' and there was every cause for alarm, as a black-and-white photograph in the same bundle demonstrated. It shows Father Shanks in his cassock alongside a bearded man in Pathan-style dress with an ammunition belt slung over his shoulder. The bearded man is standing awkwardly, arms by his side, looking down at the ground. It appears to have been taken at Baramulla, and a brief inscription on the back stated that the Pathan had initially intended shooting the priest. Maureen told me that George didn't talk about the raid on the mission—but she felt that he never quite escaped the sense of terror. She and her sister first heard about the attack from the newspapers. 'We knew nothing about it till we opened the *Express*, and there was our George all over the front page, with a photograph.'

The tribal lashkar provided Kashmir with the sort of catalyst to conversion which the church has relied on ever since its inception. By killing a nun, they gave the Valley a Christian martyr. It didn't greatly help the missionaries in finding an audience for the gospel. George Shanks, according to his sister, claimed just one conversion in Kashmir in more than two decades of missionary work. Mill Hill had been responsible for Catholic missionary endeavour in Kashmir ever since given the task of evangelising the area by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation

of the Faith in 1887. The church took steps to establish itself in Baramulla in 1891. It was never promising territory for missionaries. Mill Hill's superior general, visiting Kashmir in 1960, offered words of solace and appreciation to his missionaries. 'Your work is not easy,' he declared, 'your lives have an element of peculiar loneliness not found in other missions. You have not the consolation of seeing the Church thrive and expand as a result of your labours. You are not cheered and encouraged by a great influx of converts into the Church. You sow in hard, stony arid soil so that in God's own time, others may reap.'[4]

More than a century of endeavour by the Mill Hill Fathers, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, and assorted Protestant groups has done little to expand the number of churchgoers in Kashmir. The 1941 census revealed just over 3,000 Christians in the entire princely state of Jammu and Kashmir—fewer than one in a thousand of the total population. Many of the Sunday worshippers at the service I attended at Holy Family Church in Srinagar were south Indians who happened to be based in Kashmir, either as civil servants or with the Indian military. It's a similar story at the convent church at Baramulla. In and around Baramulla there are a dozen or so Christian families. Most came originally from outside the Valley and converted generations ago. Any recent converts are likely to keep a low profile. The sensitivities of attempting to win converts have always been immense, and with the rise of Islamic radicalism have become more so. Father Shanks once recorded that of all the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim students who attended St Joseph's College in Baramulla, 'in no cases have these young men . . . emerged from our care as Christians: we have made no attempt to push religion down their throats'. Several decades later, one of Father Shanks's successors, a south Indian priest based in Kashmir, told me that he refused to hand out copies of the New Testament, even on request, to escape any taint of seeking converts. 'The day we do that,' he remarked, 'is our last day here.'

The minuscule number of Catholics in the Kashmir Valley, and the modest congregations, does not mean that the Christian churches have been without influence and standing. Early missionaries, both Anglican and Catholic, put much of their emphasis on education. A mission school was established in Baramulla in 1891, and St Joseph's High School was inaugurated in 1909. St Joseph's, along with Burn Hall and Presentation Convent schools in Srinagar and the Protestant-foundation Tyndale-Biscoe boys and girls schools in Srinagar and Anantnag have educated much of the Kashmir Valley's elite. They still do. Sheikh Abdullah sent

his sons and daughters to the Tyndale-Biscoe schools. Maharaja Sir Hari Singh sent the crown prince to the Presentation Convent school for a while, where he occasionally came across Father Shanks. They remain the schools of choice for much of Kashmir's middle class.

As well as the emphasis on education, the pioneering Catholic missionaries were keen to reach the women of Kashmir and to offer medical provision. They sought the help of Franciscan nuns, who were already established in Punjab. In 1916, two nuns made an exploratory journey to Baramulla, which they found to be a bustling and 'wonderfully beautiful' town. 'Your daughters are the first women religious who have ever set foot in Kashmir,' they reported back to the order's superior general. 'What a mission here in Kashmir—not a single indigenous Christian!' There were two Catholic missionaries, one in Baramulla and the other in Srinagar. In Baramulla, the nuns stated, there were five or six European families, and only four Catholics among them. The missionary there was 'counting on Sisters to approach the women and their daughters, and certainly without Sisters their conversion would be very difficult. We visited four villages, and in each of them the women asked us to stay . . . I pray that we can make this foundation, for this is utterly virgin soil which has never been evangelised nor even visited by missionaries until barely twelve to fifteen years ago.'[5]

It was another five years before the convent was founded, with an initial complement of four nuns. They ran a dispensary, visited the sick—sometimes travelling to villages on horseback, or by shikara, the local small boats—and founded an orphanage (which was later relocated to Rawalpindi). A purpose-built chapel was constructed in the mid-1920s, and a fifteen-bed hospital established by the end of that decade, serving particularly the women and children of the area. The nuns 'labour ceaselessly of the women of the district,' Father Shanks asserted. 'Their Dispensary copes with upwards of two hundred patients a day: their small hospital is full the year round: their creche for unwanted babies rarely has an empty cradle . . . more and more of the local women are coming to the Hospital, to have their babies in hygienic surroundings . . . . Many a young child-mother owes her life + that of her child to these white-robed foreign women, + is shyly grateful.'

The convent's 1947 roll-call listed sixteen nuns—one Indian, and the others of ten European nationalities. Mother Teresalina, the nun who died in the attack, and another recently arrived Spanish nun, were the only sisters under thirty years of age. Most were in their forties or older.

Among them were several qualified by training or experience as nurses, pharmacists or dispensary workers, while others either tended the gardens, took responsibility for the linen and laundry or provided ministry and medical care for outlying villages.

The mission was located adjoining the more imposing edifice of St Joseph's College, and together the convent, hospital and college were the principal buildings of Baramulla. As the Kashmir crisis developed and the lashkar began to advance, it appears that the residents of this trio of Catholic institutions were resigned to being overrun by the Pathan fighters. Father Shanks's initial story of the attack, a contemporary account written as if intended for circulation within his religious order, was both complacent and self-deprecatory in tone:

> We all knew that Baramulla would be enlisted by tribesmen that morning, Oct 27th. . . . There was no particular point in our decision to remain and face the music—we did not think there would be any bodily danger for us, so we decided that our best policy, would be to carry on as if nothing special was happening. The Sisters were going about their morning rounds in the Hospital; the College and School being closed, we had nothing to do. So we fell back on the Englishmens [sic] remedy for lack of work and ordered tea.
>
> Firing started at 10.30 promptly. From a point of vantage on the terrace in front of the Presbytery we watched the progress of the party with detached interest.[6]

Indeed, Father Shanks's view was so detached he appears not to have been aware that the tribal army reached Baramulla, and took control of part of the town, on the previous evening—Sunday, 26 October. The mission buildings were on the Srinagar side of the town, and were not in the line of fire until the following morning.

A much fuller and richer account of the mission's fate at the hands of the lashkar also came from Father Shanks's hand—the account he set down several years after the event in a desk diary, locked away in the basement of St Joseph's College at Mill Hill.[7] The first time I read the diary was in the company, in the most macabre of senses, of one of the priest's neighbours. Mill Hill's archivist had warned me not to be alarmed to find a coffin resting in the ante-room of the archive. The remains of the order's founder, Cardinal Vaughan, had been disinterred from the grave in the college grounds, and were awaiting reburial at Westminster Cathedral. The college chapel had been deemed insufficiently secure, so

the coffin was being stored temporarily alongside the other remnants of Mill Hill's past in the basement.

As I leafed through the pages, and sought to make out Shanks' sometimes hurried hand, my unease at sharing the space with a long dead cardinal began to lift. I had alighted on an unpublished and hitherto unknown eyewitness account of a moment of great historical drama. It threw new light on the fate of St Joseph's mission, and also illuminated the story of the invasion of Kashmir, offering a contemporary commentary on the origins of the Kashmir crisis. Inside the dark green bindings of the page-a-day diary for 1952, sold by a stationery store in the Pakistani city of Lahore, George Shanks had sought to deliver his comprehensive account of the Baramulla attack. An inscription inside the diary, written by a missionary colleague, reads: 'Attempt at writing a book on the raids in Baramulla in Oct. 1947 by Mgr Shanks in 1953'. Early in that year, according to a clerical obituarist, Shanks had fallen ill with tuberculosis and was confined to bed for nine months, which is presumably what gave him the opportunity to write. It's not the sort of day-to-day narrative that you associate with a diary. Father Shanks appears to have chanced upon an unused diary to set down a first draft of his detailed (and unfinished) account of the raid and its aftermath. He wrote up several versions of the attack—private letters for clerical superiors and more polished accounts for religious publications—but this is a much more sustained and ambitious personal narrative, clearly intended for wider publication.

Father Shanks mapped out in note form the structure of his book, the chapter headings, and a brief outline of the plot. He sought to write the body of his story from the front of the diary, while working on a prologue from other end. The one hundred or so handwritten pages, replete with insertions and crossings out, are not only incomplete but also inconsistent. In some places, participants in the drama are named. In others, the same people are disguised by assumed identities. There is at times a hint of dialogue and incident embellished to attract an audience, and perhaps to compete with H.E. Bates's Baramulla bestseller *The Scarlet Sword*. Whatever prompted George Shanks to set down his story six years after the event, the unfinished draft of his intended book is by far the fullest surviving account of the attack on the Baramulla mission.

Shanks began his detailed story on the 26 October 1947, with the raiders expected imminently. 'An unnatural silence hung over the town of Baramulla. Traffic had stopped completely. Little knots of people stood on the main Srinagar road which passed the Mission. The atmosphere was palpably charged with hushed suspense.'

> Certainly the main road had presented a different appearance the day before, with the mass exodus of Sikh and Hindu families in full spate. Every available lorry had been pressed into service: Sikh husbands + fathers, knowing that whatever happened, they at least could expect no mercy at the hands of the Pathans, had bundled wives, children + old folk into every possible inch of space. The fare for the 34-mile journey to S[rina]gar, normally a matter of a rupee or so, had risen to fifty + more—a twenty-five seater bus fetched at least fifteen-hundred. He had seen rich Sikh landlords, caught unawares, frantically begging lorry-drivers for places, offering fantastic prices for the impossible, and finally being forced to send of[f] their families by bullock-cart. All of which afforded ill-concealed delight to the local Muslims, who did not improve matters by regaling them with lurid accounts of the treatment meted out to Sikhs at Muzaffarabad + other places down the road.[8]

The sense of impending danger had prompted St Joseph's College to send its boarding students out of harm's way. The mission's patients too had dispersed:

> . . . the Hospital had practically emptied en masse that morning. He had watched some of them go: girls within a few days of their confinement, women half-dead with T.B. or cancer, young mothers with their few days' old babies, children with stomachs burnt by their 'kangris', the little wicker-covered fire pots which they hold under their shirt + invariably spilt on themselves in bed: hurried off their sick-beds by fearful husbands + taken away by tonga, on beds, in litters, or painfully dragging themselves of[f] on foot: Hindu, Sikh, Mussulman [Muslim] women fleeing the advancing shadow of the bogey-man from Waziristan, the menacing spectre of rape at their heels. A bare handful of patients remained now—a Hindu girl whose people had abandoned her; the Sikh wife of one of Fr. X's College staff, Punam Singh, far advanced in T.B., and in the ninth month of her pregnancy, whose husband, warned of the practical certainty of a miscarriage if she were subjected to the discomforts of a packed lorry into Srinagar, had reluctantly agreed to leave her to the protection of the Mission. Then there was Mrs Dykes with her new baby, her two little boys + her husband: Their sea-passages booked for England, they were only waiting for their plane booking out of Srinagar. Colonel Dykes had been very plainly pleased at the

> exodus of Sikhs + Hindus; and now, safe in the thought of the prestige of the British Army ('saw a couple of British Tommies empty a street of these beggars in Bannu, Padre') awaited events with bored equanimity. The remaining patient in the hospital, Mrs Lal, was in a state of nervousness bordering on tears. Poor soul, thought Fr. X. she at least had some reason for apprehension. The English wife of a Hindu ex-employee of the Kashmir Govt, it was quite possible that her husband was a marked man.[9]

Mrs Lal was actually Celia Pasricha, a London woman whose husband, Brij Lal Pasricha, a Punjabi Hindu, had been trained in Britain as an electrical engineer and had been the chief engineer at the maharaja's power plant at Mahura. The Pasrichas and several of their children took refuge at the mission as the tribesmen advanced. Their eldest daughter Leela—then in her early thirties—had headed to Srinagar by bus to try to arrange the evacuation of her son and her sister's two children. I met Leela almost sixty years after the attack, a petite, elegant and fiercely proud woman living in a retirement village on the coast of Maine in the north-east of the United States. She had no photographs or mementos of her life in Kashmir. They were all looted, along with her fur coats (she still talked longingly of her snow leopard fur), her saris and other possessions. The only remnant of her years in Baramulla was a small, delicate side table—which she reclaimed years later, when she chanced upon this looted relic from her old home in the house of the family's Kashmiri lawyer.

'There were rumours that something was going to happen,' Leela reminisced. 'So I managed to get into a bus. I had my servants out. I said you get me a seat on a bus, and I went to Nedou's [hotel in Srinagar]. I got a room.' She was from one of the Valley's best connected families, and used her charm and influence to try to secure a passage out of Kashmir for the three children. She managed that. 'So I had to call my sister [in Baramulla] and say: get a tonga, get any blessed thing you can, but come.' Inder Cheema, Leela's son, was then ten years old. He shared memories of a day-long journey into the Kashmiri capital. And vague recollections of army trucks, apparently containing the maharaja's troops, streaming through Baramulla away from the fighting back to Srinagar. The big problem was finding any means of transport:

> It was extremely difficult, as I guess a lot of people were trying to get away from that area. Eventually a tonga was found—a tonga is

> a two-wheeled horse-drawn carriage with limited capacity for carrying passengers. It managed to take us—that is my aunt Pam, her two children and myself. So anyway, we set off for Srinagar in this tonga—took us all day to get there. It was late in the evening when we did. I believe I remember several stops so that the tonga man could feed the horse. And then I just have that recollection of getting in late at night. It was dark and cold. And it was wonderful to get to Nedou's hotel, where my mother had this lovely fire going in this room, and food and so forth.

Inder and his cousins managed to fly out of Srinagar to safety. Most Kashmiris, even middle-class professionals, were not so fortunate.

Many Kashmiri Muslims had no wish to flee in the face of the tribal army. The level of disaffection with the maharaja was high, and a lashkar entering the Kashmir Valley in the name of Islam, and promising liberation from the Hindu monarchy, was bound to attract a groundswell of support. Sheikh Ghulam Mohammed, a retired teacher, had been about ten at the time of the invasion—the same age as Leela Pasricha's son. I called on him at his well-appointed home in Baramulla. He greeted me with a warm smile, and a cup of kahwa, the spiced Kashmiri tea. In October 1947, he was living with his uncle in the small town of Uri, which the raiders passed through on their way to Baramulla. 'They were not in uniform,' he recalled. 'They were common people having guns with them, and they came telling us we will free you from [the] maharaja's regime. This much I remember. Even I saw local people who joined these people. And they were telling: we are going to liberate you from the clutches of Maharaja Hari Singh. This was the slogan. People were not happy with the maharaja at that time, especially people living in the rural areas.' The lashkar appears to have attracted relatively few Kashmiri recruits as it advanced into the Valley, though there are indications that at least some of the looting, for which Kashmiris hold the tribesmen entirely to blame, was a local settling of scores and grabbing of refugees' goods.

The account Father Shanks set down in his desk diary caught both the apprehension of non-Muslims as the lashkar approached, and the initial enthusiasm for the raiders among many local Muslims. He tellingly recorded a conversation on the eve of the raiders' entry into Baramulla:

> Mohammed Yusuf, one of the [college's] B.A. students, had come to warn the Fathers.

'You have heard, Father, that the Pathans may enter Baramulla this evening?' he said gravely.

'I do seem to have heard such rumour, Yusuf. What about it? I hope you are not losing your nerve. Aren't you glad that they are coming to liberate you from the Hindus? And haven't you got a big feast ready for them in the Wazir's [a municipal official] compound? I believe you yourself are a member of the Students section of the Committee of Welcome'.

'That is true, Father, but all the same these are wild people. It may be that some of them might get out of hand + do some mischief'.

Mischief! With every public building in Muzaffarabad, just inside the border, burnt to the ground; with Uri, a prosperous market centre 27 miles away, completely destroyed, they call i[t] mischief! Smiling grimly to himself, Fr. X wondered what kind of liberation was this, that started by burning the villages of the liberated + rendering them homeless.

'We have heard' continued Yusuf, 'that there has been some trouble in Uri—'

'Oh, that! For the Pathans that was just a bit of good, clean fun. Sheer exuberance, you might say. A bit overdone, perhaps, but—'

'Suppose it happens the same way here?'

'I don't see why it should. Your Pathan friends are coming to liberate Kashmir, aren't they? Which is just what the Mission has been trying to do for the last 40 years—to liberate you from ignorance by our school + hospital work. There is no earthly reason why they should molest us. A bit of looting, perhaps, if they have time before they push on to Srinagar, but you don't imagine they are going to stick knives in us or burn the Mission down, do you?'

'All the same, Father, I think you + Fr. Y should go up into the hills for a couple of days, just until the main body of tribesmen has passed through'.

'Take to the jungle! Not on your life. I am too much of a coward, Yusuf. I'd never dare to face Baramulla again if I ran away like that!'

'As you wish, Father: I hope you won't regret it'. And Yusuf had marched off importantly to help with the preparation of the triumphal arch through which the conquering tribesmen would enter the town.

> Watching him go, Fr. X wondered what had prompted this sudden solicitude for the safety of the Fathers. Ten years among the Kashmiris had taught him not to expect much in the way of gratitude from them, to look uncharitably for a double motive. Born twisters, these Kashmiris. Ah well, they had the saving graces of infinite long-suffering, good humour, and, when caught out, a cheerful acceptance of fate.[10]

The priest gave away in his diary jottings as much about his attitude to the people to whom he was ministering as about their perspective towards the invasion. It is revealing on both counts. Among Baramulla's none-too-numerous educated Muslim elite, there was sympathy for the advancing army.

It can be no more than informed conjecture, but it's possible that the student Shanks remembered talking to was Muhammad Yusuf Saraf. He was born in Baramulla in 1923, and had attended St Joseph's College where he was president of the students' union. Saraf had been active in local politics, first in Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference and then in the rival Muslim Conference. Writing in the 1970s, when he was chief justice of the high court in Pakistan Kashmir, Saraf gave his own graphic description of the scene in his home town of Baramulla as the invaders approached—a remarkably telling account of the initial support for the lashkar, and its rapid ebbing away.

'How anxiously Muslims waited for the arrival of tribesmen,' Saraf wrote. 'Hundreds walked several miles down the river to welcome them ahead and accompany them on their historic entry in to the town—perhaps to enshrine in their family annals the proud heritage of at least having joined their steps with those who were coming to help them rid off [sic] the century-old Dogra slavery. Never, never in its history of several hundred years, had the town witnessed such a spontaneous gaiety and enthusiasm. The whole populace looked almost mad . . . . Which face it was that was not lit with beaming smiles, having shed aside, for a while, the woes and sorrows suffered over centuries? It was a spectacle to watch. How can a writer like myself, trained in a hard school where emotions have no place, arrest in words the ecstasy and the fantasy that it was? Almost the entire male Muslim inhabitants and thousands others from the countryside—as far away as Sopore, had turned up in their choicest clothes to greet the liberators at Khanpura. Major Khurshid Anwar particularly was the centre of attraction. Almost everyone wanted to thank him personally.'[11]

From the perspective of the priests' house in the grounds of St Joseph's College, the entry of the tribal lashkar looked not in the least like an act of liberation. The nuns had been on a religious retreat, interrupted by the approach of the tribal army, and had decided to stay at the mission. Father Shanks, however, seems to have tried to arrange a last-minute evacuation. A British man working in Baramulla for a timber company, J.E. Thompson—who was then courting, and later married, Leela Pasricha—was prevailed upon to make contact with the Kashmiri authorities. 'I myself was living in BARAMULA,' he later told British diplomats, 'but at the request of Father SHANKS went into Srinagar by cycle the day before the trouble started to try and arrange evacuation.' It seems that he was also carrying a letter from Colonel Dykes 'asking for transport for himself, his wife, three children and a servant from Baramulla to Srinagar'.[12] But by this time, what was left of the Kashmiri military and civil administration was focussed on trying to repulse the raiders. The beginning of Indian army operations in the Valley prevented any possibility of taking a truck into Baramulla to rescue those in the convent and hospital. The attempt to get out had been left too late, and the small band of missionaries and those that flocked to their sanctuary were at the mercy of the marauders.

Father Shanks recounted the final stages of the tribal army's approach on the morning of Monday, October 27. The tribesmen appear to have advanced not along the main road, but down the hills at the other side of the mission:

> There they come! Over the top of the hill there!' All eyes turned in the direction of his pointing hand. Down from the summit of that hill where, last night, the remnants of the J[ammu] + K[ashmir] army had lain concealed, thin white lines could be seen winding through the scrub bushes. Puffs of white smoke hung over them: occasionally the line would break + disappear, only to reappear lower down the hill-side
>
> 'Looks like the poor old J + K's have had it' observed Anthony. 'They can't hold up a horde like that for long'.
>
> The heads of the creeping white lines disappeared among the trees at the bottom of the hill; one by one the thin columns followed, leaving the slopes bare again. The whole descent had taken not more than ten minutes . . . .
>
> The firing was close at hand now; the watchers could see nothing of either side, but shouts could now be distinguished, and

> an occasional yell of triumph showed where a tribesman had found his man. They could not be more than two or three hundred yards away from the Mission now—[13]

Within minutes, separate groups of attackers had targeted different buildings within the mission in what was a race to bag the best booty. The priests were outside their house adjoining the college when the raiders reached them.

> We found ourselves surrounded by some fifteen of the most unpleasant hoodlums I have ever seen. Armed to the teeth with rifle, sword, dagger, most of them carrying an axe for business purposes. Untidy black beards, unkempt long hair, dirty black turbans, ragged clothes caked with blood and dirt, dull bloodshot eyes, which completed the picture did little to raise our spirits. One of them extended a grimy hand—politely I shook it. It seemed that is not what he wanted; and impatient of making himself understood in Pushto, he asked no further. By plunging his hand into my trouser pocket and helping himself. The others were being treated in like manner—money, watches, keys, were taken away from us, and then Father Mallett and I were half dragged, half pushed into my two roomed house, followed by all the gang, the door locked, spirits sank still further. A scene of indescribable confusion followed; locks were burst open with axe blows, drawers were pulled out and emptied, furniture overturned and ripped open. The accumulated treasures of ten years disappeared into spacious pockets—we were too busy dodging swinging axes and getting out of the way of rifle butts to worry about that . . . . In the midst of the wreckage, we could not help admiring the thoroughness of the half savage raiders, trained from childhood in the art of looting half an hours [sic] work with the axe and knife in those eight rooms, and the ragman would not [have] looked at what was left. . . .
>
> Staggering from under the weight of their loot, done up in our blankets, one of them wearing my beret, that perched on top of his turban, another feeling very proud of himself in a confessional stole worn as a tie, most of them sporting the College ties they had found, they eventually departed, and we were allowed to come to the open.[14]

By serendipity, this almost comic scene of clerical vestments being borne away by the tribesmen as trophies had a remarkable reprise. One

of the grander of the priestly robes, an elaborate brocade and gold cope, reappeared a few years later at an elite boys school in the hill town of Murree in Pakistan. The school's English principal was given it by 'one of my Pathan boys' and showed it to a visiting young American. 'The boy is the son of an important chief,' our host explained. 'He brought this for me to make into a dressing-gown. It came from Baramula. . . . When the tribes were on the Kashmir *jihad* in 1947, they went through there. The wilder ones made quite a mess, I'm afraid, before their chiefs came up . . . This thing must have been down in Waziristan ever since.'[15]

The anecdote dovetails neatly with Father Shanks's account of the attack, providing a trail that points unambiguously towards Waziristan as the home of the perpetrators of the raid. But while the two missionary priests were watching their personal possessions being baled up and carried off, scenes of much greater tragedy were taking place a short distance away, in and around the mission hospital.

{5}

The Attack

'I can remember waking up, and there was gunfire all around the place. The whole neighbourhood, there was shooting going on. I got up and went into the gardens of the hospital and there was some nuns standing, talking together, obviously very worried and concerned. And they beckoned me over to them. And suddenly, the whole place erupted with shooting, shouting, screaming, yelling. And the nuns grabbed me and we went into a room next to the garden—I think that was the medicine room for the hospital, I remember—and locked ourselves in.'

It was mid-morning on Monday, 27 October. The raiders had scaled the walls of the convent grounds and started shooting. Amid the confusion, Tom Dykes was separated from his parents and his younger brothers. 'Then these fellows that had raided the hospital started to batter down the door of this room we were in. The splinters started to fly across the room, and I could see the wild faces through the cracks in the door, and I noticed that at the back of the room there was another door, and I tried it and it wasn't locked and I ran for it. I left the nuns. They were all huddled, huddled in a corner, obviously petrified, holding each other in a group. I don't know what happened to them. I do remember seeing some of them later, and they were staggering around the place with their habits torn. In retrospect maybe they were raped, but I certainly don't know if that did happen.'

Tom Dykes was five years old when the tribesmen killed his parents. The three Dykes boys—the youngest then just two weeks old—were brought up by an aunt. They were not encouraged to ask questions about their mother and father and how they died. They never returned to Kashmir. All three men spent much of their adult lives in southern Africa, another unhappy appendage of Empire. Tom made his home near Johannesburg. I met him when he came to London to visit his brother. Tom had adjusted well to the changes in South Africa. He would not be part of the white flight out of the country, or even out of the orbit of its

principal city, he insisted. He enjoyed Johannesburg, for all its problems. He spoke softly but confidently, a man with a gentle face, stocky, with fair hair and an accent with only the slightest South African cadence. Tom's modesty and reserve invited trust, and his words bore authority. Tom's brother told me he couldn't remember ever talking about his parents' deaths to his siblings. But Tom's memories, if rarely rehearsed, were clear and compelling. His recall of his parents was distinct, and strengthened by an array of family photos and memorabilia. 'Looking at photographs of my parents is rather strange actually, because they both died when they were in their early thirties. It's always a bit funny looking at your parents as young people, considerably younger than oneself is now. And that's the only way I can think of them or imagine them. As youngsters. It's a bit odd really.'

Baramulla wasn't simply the place where his parents were killed. It was also the place where Tom was born. In the same mission hospital. St Joseph's had a good reputation, especially as a maternity hospital, and its location along the Rawalpindi–Srinagar road made it—in those pre-Partition days—easily accessible. Tom had memories of holidays in Kashmir, spending time on a houseboat, and watching his father cast a line to catch trout. 'I often wonder what my father would have done when he left the army,' he commented—adding ruefully that he didn't even know whether his father, born and bred in Edinburgh, had a Scottish accent. 'I accepted what happened years ago. But one thing I felt a little bad about was that as a child, I'd try to talk about the incident, which I do remember vividly. And generally speaking people didn't like talking about it to me. And that included my own family. I can't really remember discussing it with anybody in my family. They probably thought the best thing to do was forget it, which I think probably is not the best thing on these occasions.'

From Tom and his brothers, from surviving fellow officers, and from Colonel Dykes's service record and other documents in the official archives, it's possible to assemble a tolerably complete account of Tom and Biddy's lives.[1] Tom was born in 1914 and educated in Edinburgh. He attended the Royal Military College at Sandhurst where he was a sound but unspectacular cadet, and headed out as an officer in the Indian army when twenty-one years old. Tom Dykes spent his first year in India as a second lieutenant with the Royal Scots based in Lahore, now the capital of the Pakistan's Punjab province. Sam Manekshaw, who later rose to be a field marshal in the Indian army, was his contemporary and friend. He remembered Tom as 'very tall, six-foot-two or something like that. I

can picture him, light hair . . . nice, good-looking officer.' Life in Lahore for young, carefree officers in the mid-1930s was none too onerous. 'We enjoyed ourselves,' Manekshaw recalled. 'No dearth of girlfriends. There were restaurants. There were dancing halls. One of the others would say: Sam, can I take your car? And I'd say: take the damn thing, but look after it.'

After an initial year in Lahore, the young officers had to select an enduring regimental loyalty. Sam Manekshaw opted for the Frontier Force. Tom Dykes joined the Sikh Regiment, and was obliged to study both Urdu and Punjabi. The Second World War brought with it accelerated promotion and active service, particularly on the arduous Burmese front repelling Japan's advance towards India's eastern frontier. Tom undertook chemical warfare and jungle warfare courses, and ended the war with a clutch of medals. He also emerged from the war married and with children. Biddy Clarke was from a family with a tradition of service in the Indian army. She made the passage out as a military nurse. According to family folklore, she captured Tom's attention by staging a fall from her bike to show off her shapely legs. They married in September 1940 in Agra, the city of the Taj Mahal. The venue was the East India Company's imposing St George's church. It was a grand ceremony, by all accounts, with fellow officers providing a sword of honour, holding up their ceremonial swords to form an arch for the newly married couple. As newly-weds, they got to know Kashmir, a popular rest and recreation spot for British soldiers and officials during the war years. A friend of Biddy's took holiday snaps of three wives sitting on the steps of a houseboat in Srinagar in June 1942.[2] Biddy had a spaniel on her lap, disguising her pregnancy. Her first child, Tom junior, was born in Baramulla three months later.

As the British pulled out of India, Lieutenant Colonel Tom Dykes was charged with rebasing the Sikh Regiment from Nowshera in what had become Pakistan to Ambala, north of Delhi, on the Indian side of the Partition line. He became acting commandant of the new regimental centre. While a few British officers chose to stay on with the Indian army after independence, Tom Dykes was probably intending to remain in India just for a few more months, helping to settle his old regiment in their new setting. Major Ben Suter, who served with Tom when the First Sikhs were based at Nowshera, described him to me as tall, silent and a touch severe. Marguerite Suter got to know Biddy Dykes well—a very motherly woman with 'a round, happy face, darkish hair and a lovely smile'—and had intended to accompany Biddy up to Baramulla in the autumn of 1947 for the birth of the Dykes's third child. But the Suters' passage

home came up more quickly than expected, and they headed to Mumbai to board a boat.

It is remarkable, with hindsight, that the Dykes's persisted with their plan for Biddy to go to Baramulla for the birth in spite of the storm clouds gathering over Kashmir. And it's even more remarkable that with the invasion under way, the family didn't make a more determined attempt to get out to Srinagar. The lack of preparedness at the mission as the lashkar struck appears to have been based on a false confidence that a foreign-run religious establishment would be spared depredation. There had been no full evacuation, no bunkering down, and no assembling in the most secure building.

When the attackers struck, there was mayhem. Tom never saw his parents again, alive or dead. He knew that his father had not died immediately, but wasn't taken to see him on his deathbed. In the immediate aftermath of the assault, having slipped out of the medicine room through a back door, Tom found himself in one of the wards of the mission hospital:

> The tribesmen were looting the place, they were pulling everything apart, and putting their booty into sheets which lay on the floor and were made up into bundles. They were very nice—well, when I say nice, I don't remember them being unkind to me. They took me with them, and, as I say, bundled this stuff into their sheets, and made their way to the front of the hospital where they put all their booty in a pile.
>
> Rather fortuitously, our servant—I do remember his name, his name was Feroze—saw me with them. He was obviously milling about out in the road there, and he came up, and he persuaded them to let me go off with him. And he said well, we must go and find your family. Which we duly did, and went back to the central part of the hospital, a garden area with a path round it. And we came across these bodies, covered with blood. And sitting on top, howling his eyes out, was my little brother Douglas. Not very nice.
>
> I do remember the body of a girl. I don't know if she was related to one of the medical staff, but I think she was a teenager. But that's the only one which I actually remember recognising. I was only a little boy, so my memory is obviously not that clear, although it's fairly vivid nevertheless.
>
> At that point, a young girl came up to me—I think I'm right in saying that, it was a young girl—and she said to me, well, your mother and father are dead. And, funnily enough, I don't remember

> feeling too much. I just felt a bit numb and I can't remember feeling too many emotions really. I have an idea it was the daughter of the lady doctor. That was my memory. That's what I seem to remember.

The young girl was Angela Barretto, whose mother, Greta, had recently started working as the doctor and surgeon at the mission hospital. Biddy Dykes had written, in a letter to her sister, how Tom and Douglas had 'got a friend in the Dr['s] little girl . . . and all rush madly round the place'. Angela Aranha, as she had become, recalled how the story of her parents' bravery at Baramulla had been a source of pride. She had been born into a devoutly Catholic family of Goan origin. One of her half-sisters had served as a nun in Australia. At her flat in the heart of Bangalore, close to the cathedral, she showed me her precious collection of family photographs—her parents just after their marriage; with friends at a picnic; snapshots of her mother in the years after the tragedy.

Angela was a little younger than Tom. She remembered a party to celebrate her fourth birthday held in Baramulla just a couple of weeks before the attack. She found it difficult to distinguish between her own memories of the incident, and what she recalled hearing from her mother and others. She couldn't remember telling her friend Tom about the death of his parents. But she had a faint recollection of playing with young boys in the mission grounds, and came up unprompted with Douglas (Tom's younger brother, then two years old) as the name of one of her playmates.

Angela's distant memories of the initial attack on the convent and hospital offer a powerful confirmation of Tom's account. 'All of a sudden,' she recalled, there was 'a lot of noise, and screaming and shouting':

> These men came from all directions, climbing over the compound wall. And these wild men, I am told, they went [with] choppers and axes, and breaking down all the doors around, especially in the convent. They smashed everything in sight. And they actually attacked people in their beds. Any adult person they just stabbed or shot, and there were screams and cries and—I don't know, I remember being pushed into a room, and some frightened nurses were there. These nurses had pushed a cupboard, I remember that, and people were thudding and banging, and they were trying to push this door open. And I was in that room. The voices went away and they went to the next ward. And what they were doing I don't know, but we could hear the cries and shouts and the hammering

> and screaming all around us. And these nurses were there with me, comforting me, and they were scared themselves.
>
> The memories I have of these fellows with beards—this is what I remember. Because these nightmares used to come to me later on. I would get up in the night and I would be terrified. And they came over the wall, that I remember. You know, big beards and guns—maybe some had turbans and things like that, but they were all shouting and they were very unruly. They were not like anybody from an organised army.

Tom's and Angela's interlocking accounts, at times tentative, but also raw and immediate, are the most poignant memories of the attack.

Sister Emilia's recollections echoed the main themes of the children's testimony—the sense of shock, the brutality, the violence with which the raiders searched for loot. 'They were all over at first, especially the tribes,' she told me. 'They were up with Pakistan, fighting, and they were sending these tribes to kill anyone they find in a house.' Her memories of the tribesmen stalking round the hospital veranda, ransacking, robbing and assaulting, had been rubbed smooth by constant repetition. And that, compounded by her advanced years, made it difficult to reach beyond her customary recitation and probe further. 'Some of us are youngsters,' said Sister Rosy Joseph, the bespectacled, soft-voiced south Indian serving as the convent's sister superior when I visited in the summer of 2003. It turned out to be Emilia's last summer at Baramulla. 'She does have good memories of what happened in 1947 and she keeps telling us this is what had taken place, and this is what happened to Teresalina, how she went along with her the previous day and how she enjoyed life to the utmost. Then the next day she is no more. In front of her, her life was taken away.' Emilia's story has become almost a legend, from which the convent has gained a strengthened sense of mission. 'It is a tragedy,' lamented Sister Rosy, talking of the raiders' attack. 'At the same time, it is a heroic act on the part of our sisters. So we have cherished these moments. Although there was a chance for them to move out, sort of submit to the needs and demands of the attackers, instead we stood to our principles. As a result, we lost one of our precious sisters. In that way, we insist it is a heroic event which has taken place.'

This sense of heroism and sacrifice has infused the survivors' accounts of the attack on the mission. All attest to the speed with which the assault occurred and the disempowering sense of shock. No one was

quite sure of the exact sequence of events. Confusion prevailed amid the clamour and tumult of the raid. There's no unanimity about who exactly the attackers were. Most of the survivors pointed the finger at Mahsuds, but some insisted that Wazirs were also among those responsible for the violence. The attackers came in discrete groups. One of the recurring themes of the survivors' memories was that no sooner had one group of ransackers rummaged through personal possessions and demanded money than another group would arrive to repeat the operation. The looters had several targets—medical supplies, sheets, clothes and any personal valuables they could find.

It seems that some of the tribesmen started looting and robbing the few remaining patients in the hospital. One of the patients either resisted or otherwise roused the ire of the attackers. She was killed—most accounts say she was stabbed to death. To judge by the gravestone in the convent grounds, she was a Hindu, Mrs Motia Devi Kapoor, from Almora in the north Indian hills. Another patient was seriously wounded. Philomena, a south Indian nurse in training to enter holy orders, tried to come to their aid and was shot dead. Colonel Dykes sought to remonstrate with the attackers and was shot and fatally wounded. His wife appears to have run to help her husband and she too was killed.

Hearing the commotion, the convent's Belgian mother superior, Mother Aldetrude, rushed to the scene. Alongside was her twenty-nine-year-old Spanish assistant Mother Teresalina, who had been in Baramulla only for a few weeks.[3] A raider took aim at the Mother Superior. Both nuns were hit by bullets. The assistant's wounds proved to be fatal. In the grounds of the convent, Angela's father Jose Barretto was helping some elderly nuns to safety. 'We were moving towards the church when we saw Mr Barretto arguing with a party of Pathans who had caught Sister Belen from Spain and were dragging her,' according to the recollection of an eyewitness. 'We were still about ten yards away shouting at the Pathans to leave the sister when one of them shot Mr Barretto at point blank range, left Sister Belen and ran into the church . . . . On reaching Mr Barretto we found him motionless and dead, his blood flowing on the road next to the only chestnut tree a few yards away.'[4] Within a matter of minutes, six people had been killed or fatally wounded and several others injured.

Sister Priscilla, an Italian nun then in her mid-forties, was in the middle of the maelstrom and left an impassioned account of the attack:

> We were in the dispensary, Sister Belen and myself, when we heard gunshots. So we closed the dispensary and while I made my way to

> the hospital to try to calm the patients, Sister Belen went to the convent. All of a sudden, the Mahsuds arrived in a fury, shouting out in their language and firing gunshots. On the veranda, I'd just missed a bullet by ducking into a corner. Mr Dykes had also missed an initial shot by getting behind a pillar. Then he said to me: 'If you go inside, go to the children's room[.'] Through the window, I later saw him with a Mahsud, to whom he was saying: 'This is a hospital. What are you doing?'
>
> In the children's room we were reciting the rosary when one of the raiders got in by smashing the door with an axe. All the children screamed in terror. The man, who was armed with a gun, a knife and a revolver, seized me by the throat, and said: 'Where's the money?' He touched me everywhere, and put his hand in my pocket . . .
>
> After a while, I went on to the veranda and I saw the bodies of our poor casualties on the ground: Mother Aldetrude, Mother Teresalina and then Philomena, the tertiary, who was already dead. She was in a pool of blood. Turning my head, I saw the body of Mrs Dykes on the ground, in front of her room. Summoning up courage, I wanted to go and see if there were other injured, or patients who needed to be put in the babies' room. Passing by, I saw Col Dykes on his bed, half dead. He had managed to drag himself there, having been mortally wounded . . .[5]

As Sister Priscilla hurried to help the injured, she spotted a man she described as a Pathan officer, Major Saurab Hyat Khan. His intervention put a stop to the worst of the violence.

Father Shanks later pieced together the story of Saurab Hyat Khan's providential arrival at the mission. In the account he set down later in his desk diary, Shanks recounted how, as the tribesmen descended on Baramulla, a man on a motorbike (who turned out to be Major Hyat Khan) stopped at the home of a local Muslim teacher at St Joseph's College:

> 'Don't worry old man; I haven't come to rob you. All I want is a cup of tea—I've had nothing today yet; too busy trying to get these damned men of mine moving.' . . .
>
> The visitor was a formidable enough figure. Well over six feet in height, built on massive lines which were spoilt somewhat by a pronounced paunch and an over-fleshy face, he seemed to fill the small room. A huge + well curled black mustache gave added fierceness to a typical Pathan countenance—sharp-eyed, hawk-

> nosed, heavy-browed . . . . He wore the typical Muslim salwars, or baggy white trousers; his shirt + jacket, though soiled, was of obviously good cut; his unturbaned hair was short; and he had an air of authority which owed nothing to the Sten-gun wh. hung from his shoulder or the revolver holstered at his thigh.
>
> 'They moved quickly enough when they came over that hill half an hour ago,' said Yunus.
>
> 'Oh, that lot!' The tribesman spoke contemptuously: 'a rabble from South Waziristan sent in to mop up a few miserable Kashmiris. One of my Afridis is worth three of that mob.'
>
> 'You are an Afridi, sir?'
>
> 'Of course. I am . . . third in command of this expedition. We're going to get rid of that Maharajah for you, old man, and bring you in to Pakistan—if we don't waste too much time on the way.'[6]

Saurab Hyat Khan was an officer in the Pakistan army or in the process of transferring to Pakistan's armed forces. He behaved as—and was regarded by the tribesmen as—a commanding officer. Whether he was there under military orders, or had been gently encouraged to accompany the Pathan tribesmen into Kashmir, or in the disturbed post-Partition weeks had simply taken it on himself to join the lashkar, is not clear. His presence in Baramulla, clearly not directing operations but with a measure of authority over the tribesmen, is a telling indication of the key role of officers in Pakistan's new army in assisting the tribal forces' advance into the Kashmir Valley.

On entering Baramulla, and discovering that there was a convent and mission hospital nearby, the major—according to Father Shanks's account—hurried over on his motorcycle to make sure the tribesmen did not abuse the sisters or their patients. By the time he reached there, it was too late to stop the initial burst of shooting and killing, but he was able to prevent further bloodshed. Several of the nuns, who had witnessed the shooting down of Jose Baretto, had been rounded up in the grounds of the hospital and were convinced they were about to be shot. The expected volley of gunfire was, several testimonies aver, delayed because a tribesman was trying to extract a gold tooth from the mouth of one of the nuns:

> 'Un moment . . . permettez-moi monsieur . . .' and Sister C. fumbled at the tooth . . . Seigneur, des secours? . . . Nobody knew better

than Sister C. that the tooth was immovable: still, anything to gain a little time . . . Marie, misericorde! . . . The raiders were growling impatiently . . . Rifles were raised again . . .

'Courage, mes soeurs . . .'

A stentorian voice bellowed an order from the gateway: all heads turned in that direction. A giant of a tribesman was covering the ground towards the group in huge strides: his face was suffused with rage, the Sten gun under his arm was ready for action. At his heels . . . he flung aside the bunch of raiders + confronted the little band of sisters, panting:

'I'm sorry, sisters' he jerked out, 'have these devils been troubling you?'

'Well, sir' Sister Patricia replied for the group, 'I . . . I think they were going to shoot us . . . you can see they 'ave already killed this poor man . . .'

[The major] turned on the discomfited-looking Pathans, + poured out a flood of abuse; his men stood alert behind them, rifles ready, eyes watchful. One of the fiercest-looking of the raiders began to bluster, gesticulating towards the Sisters . . . . The Sten gun moved threateningly towards his stomach . . . he subsided sullenly: The Major bashed out another order, fortified with another flood of abuse . . . the group shuffled a little . . . the Sten gun moved again . . . the ruffians decided to make the best of it, + went off the way they had come, with many a backward murderous glance.[7]

This was the incident the nuns remembered most vividly. A Scottish nun, Mother Conwall, gave a formal evidence statement in which she recounted how Mrs Barretto, the doctor, 'and four of our SISTERS were lined up to be shot but before they could shoot a Pathan officer came and stopped them. The delay in shooting took place as the tribesmen tried to deprive a Sister of her false gold teeth.'[8] Sister Emilia was one of the nuns in line for execution, and remembered vividly the arrival of the major.

One of them, not dressed in ordinary way, he stopped just at the beginning of Baramulla to take some tea. He asked what is in Baramulla. They said there is a school and a hospital. Then he took a motorcycle and ran to us, because they said they were going to kill everybody. As he reached the gate, he said something to them and they put down their arms. Otherwise, they were just about to shoot

> up all [of] us. I think [he was] from Pakistan. Not military dress, no. Civilian. He saved us because he said to these people something to them in their own language, and they put down their arms.

Saurab Hyat Khan managed to instil a certain order amid the mayhem. Everyone in the mission was shepherded into the baby ward of the hospital. Some Hindus, Sikhs and Christians from the town also congregated there for safety. The ward is still there, with a plaque in its flagstone floor in memory of those killed in the attack. It now has room for thirteen very basic hospital beds. On 27 October 1947, it was a sanctuary for more than eighty people—some of them injured, others dying. Major Hyat provided tribesmen to act as guards and dissuade their fellow fighters from further looting. The bodies of Jose Barretto, Philomena and Mrs Kapoor were placed in another ward. The body of Biddy Dykes was carried away by a group of Mahsuds. It was found a couple of days later down a well in the convent grounds. Mrs Dykes's tweed outer clothes had been removed, but she was still wearing underclothes.

Father Shanks had not been an eyewitness to the killings, nor to Major Hyat's dramatic arrival. He was still fending off acquisitive tribesmen in the presbytery. With the immediate threat to the nuns averted, Sister Priscilla led the major to the priests' house, not knowing what fate had befallen the two British missionaries. Reaching the house, with gunshots echoing all around 'like a thunderstorm', she was alarmed to see big pools of blood on the steps. She thought the priests had been killed, but it turned out it was their dog that had been shot. Father Shanks and his colleague Father Mallett were then escorted by Major Hyat to the hospital ward where the survivors of the attack had assembled:

> The eye took in nothing at first except a muddled mass of humanity, + a conscious effort was required to sort it into its constituent parts. Gone was that peace + order. Babies' cots were huddled together on the left of the ward; near them, sitting on the floor under the windows, the Malayali [south Indian] nurses were rocking themselves backwards + forwards, moaning helplessly: at the far end of the ward, the women refugees . . . huddled together in little groups—a picture of hopeless dejection. But what brought the full horror of the situation home to us was the sight of those four wounded bodies: near the wall on the right lay Mohan Lal's wife, a gaping wound in her right shoulder, her half-witted daughter staring vacantly at her; a few feet from her lay Rev. Mother, deathlike in her pallor, with

only an occasional groan, a flutter of the eyelids, to show that she lived. On the floor in the middle of the room, a Sister bent over the body of Col. Dykes, syringe in hand; Dr B. + another Sister knelt by the side of Mother Teresalina. Pools of blood glistened on the floor at their sides: the habits of the Sisters were bloodstained to the waist. Some of them had lost their veils, rents in their clothes bore witness to the uncouth handling they had suffered: all of them bore expressions of patient resignation as they moved silently about, bringing warm water, swabs, torn-up bed-linen for bandages, cups of water to moisten parched tongues . . . Somebody was saying the Rosary aloud . . . a chorus of wailing from the cluster of cots signified the babies' disapproval of the disturbance of their peaceful routine . . .

Stupefied by the scene, we could only stare round helplessly . . . . The Major's brisk, matter-of-fact voice brought me to my senses.

'Please tell your people that they should not leave the ward on any account,' he announced. 'They should not even show their faces at the windows—particularly the women—but remain seated on the floor. My men will remain on guard at the two entrances—call them if there is any trouble . . .'

He called in the men from outside; for the first time I had an opportunity to examine them. They looked, thank God, a superior type to most of the other tribesmen I had seen—fighters rather than robbers—mostly clean-shaven, + wearing round caps of homespun instead of the hateful black turban. They looked curiously around them: one or two murmured expressions of sympathy—one of them, a smallish man with hair bobbed at the level of his ear-lobes, was openly amused . . . I took a permanent dislike to him . . .

'These are the only men you will allow into the ward', [the Major] was saying, 'This man is in charge of them: he speaks English', indicating a tall, handsome Afridi; 'They are my own men, and they will do their best to protect you . . . I cannot guarantee any more than that.'[9]

It transpired that Saurab Hyat Khan had attended a Catholic school. He told Father Shanks that as a small boy he had been educated by the Presentation Sisters in Peshawar, 'and I'm not likely to forget their kindness'. His protection of the mission was a reward of sorts for decades of educational missionary work in unpromising terrain.

The most pressing task for those trapped in the baby ward was to tend to the injured. Dr Greta Barretto gave Father Shanks an assessment

of their chances of survival. 'Mother Teresalina + Colonel Dykes are dying . . . . Mother Superior may live, if we can only stop the bleeding—there's nothing I can do to get the pieces of bullet out of her . . . . We have no instruments, no dressings, no bandages, no needles—nothing . . . . Mrs Pasricha has a flesh wound in the shoulder, + is suffering badly from shock, but she will survive . . .' Her prognosis proved correct. What impressed Father Shanks most was the manner in which she delivered it. 'I marvelled at her coolness: This was the woman whose husband, a bare hour before, had been shot before her eyes: dry-eyed, efficient, she was absorbed in her work for others. Only the lines of strain round her eyes told that she was driving herself to activity to shut out the memory of what she had seen.'

Over the course of the afternoon and evening, first Tom Dykes and then Mother Teresalina died. Father Shanks was on hand to record both moments of mortality:

> Colonel Dykes died at about 4 o'clock. He had been without morphine for the last two hours, and conscious most of the time. We had taken turns at his side . . . 'How's my wife, Padre?' 'Don't worry, Colonel, she's quite allright '—she'll be coming soon' . . . answering his agonised appeals for morphine with the lie that 'someone had gone to look for some' . . . As I knelt by his side for the last time, a shadow crossed the window nearby . . . four men passed, carrying the body of Mrs Dykes . . .
>
> The end came with merciful quickness soon after: we put the body in the Duty Room next to that of Mr B.

The three Dykes children, Tom, Douglas and James, were put in the care of Lily Boal, a British Protestant missionary from further up the Valley who had taken refuge at the convent. She was later to accompany the two older boys on the sea voyage back to Britain.

The last death came several hours later:

> Mother Teresalina died at about 10 that night . . . a death that must live long in the memories of those who assisted at it. The prayers of the dying nun, gradually fading away as she slowly sank into unconsciousness: the tear-stricken faces, the bloodstained, torn habits of the Sisters kneeling around: the wailing of the babies, ready for food again: the floor with its jumble of refugees: the pallid face of the Rev. Mother, just visible in the outer circle of the light of

> the hurricane lamp, watching the last moments of her heroic subordinate: the murmur of voices, the frequent ribald chuckle, from the circle of guards: the distant sounds of brawling from the raiders' camps all round: The occasional silhouette of a raider against the moonlit lawn: the red glow of the burning village lighting up the wall behind the dying nun.

With the death in such a manner of a woman in holy orders, Kashmir had its first Catholic martyr. 'We felt privileged to assist at the death of a Saint,' Father Shanks wrote, 'and better prepared for death ourselves in consequence.'

The burying of the bodies took place the next day. The convent cemetery, at the front of the building and close to the road, was deemed too dangerous a location. Father Shanks chose a spot more out of view at the back of the building:

> I decided to bury them all in the Sisters orchard. A friendly Mahsud Syed Sarwar Shah who had lost no time in introducing himself as a Doctor and Holyman, and 'Pope' of the Mahsuds, produced a fatigue party of half a dozen scared Kashmiris, a large grave was dug, only deep enough to be out of the reach of Jackals, and on Tuesday evening I held the strangest burial service I have ever done. No Coffins, the bodies covered with what rags of cloth the Sisters could find. No Ritual to read the official prayers of the church from. A sprinkling of holy water on the grave and on each body as Father Mallett brought it from the Hospital. A hurried De Profundis, and back for the next one. Syed Shah acting as MC and genuflecting reverently as each body passed him.

When Biddy Dykes's body was found, she too was buried in the orchard—the delay in her interment explains why she was not buried next to her husband. Mother Teresalina's remains were later moved to be alongside those of other nuns in the convent cemetery. The five graves still lie in the orchard. Colonel Dykes has a Commonwealth war grave, the only one in Kashmir. The other headstones are more simple. And in the centre of the plot is a small wooden cross recalling the raid in which those resting there were killed. It is not as smart and austere as the larger Commonwealth war cemeteries. But neither is it in any sense neglected. The simplicity of the graves, the taut inscriptions, and the beauty of the location, in a small, tranquil orchard which looks out on the looming

hills encircling the Kashmir Valley, invests the spot with a compelling enchantment, as well as an air of melancholy.

There is one matter concerning the initial hours of the tribesmen's raid on the convent to be discussed—not out of prurience, but because it reflects on the nature of the attack on the mission. The accounts of rape during the tribesmen's incursion into Kashmir are so numerous, and from all vantage points, that there can be no doubt about the considerable extent of sexual assault. Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari, at that time a teenage tribal leader taking a small group of Baluchi clansmen to participate in the Kashmir jihad, was shocked by the violence against women. 'I discovered that the tribesmen from Waziristan, Mahsuds and Wazirs, were busy looting and plundering. But what really disgusted me was that so-called upholders of religion and Islam were not even sparing Muslim women. And this really sickened me,' said Mazari. 'We came across some Kashmiri women and children on the way back, and they were literally crying and weeping, and saying look what the Muslim brothers have done to us. I didn't ask because I could imagine what they had gone through. But then later on I gathered from other sources that they were raped.'[10]

The evidence about the rape of women at St Joseph's convent and hospital is contradictory. Those accounts which are generally sympathetic to India highlight, and arguably exaggerate, the extent of rape, killing and looting, while narratives from the Pakistan perspective suggest whatever outrages took place were isolated incidents and have been blown up by India for the purposes of propaganda. In the statements of evidence of survivors, and the briefings to diplomats provided by those on the spot such as Sydney Smith and John Thompson, there was no reference to rape. Sydney Smith's reports in the *Daily Express* were suffused with a sense of the sexual menace of the Pathans, but did not allege sexual assault. Father Shanks's writing reflected the mood of sexual threat, but did not suggest that this amounted to more than lecherous looks, the pulling off of veils and tearing of habits, and the mauling of women as the tribesmen searched for jewellery and valuables. In a letter written to the order's superior general at Mill Hill just days after the evacuation, Father Shanks insisted there had been no rape:

> For the most part, after the initial onslaught of the wilder tribes, we were not molested much. It was not pleasant, of course, to have parties of savages armed to the teeth stalking into our ward at all hours of the day and night, even though they were merely curious.

> And there was always the constant fear that they would run true to type and interfere with the womenfolk. That was attempted only on one occasion, thank God, and was interrupted quite providentially . . . . I think our continued safety was due more than anything else, to the heroism of the Sisters of the Dispensary, who were on their feet almost all day, and often part of the night, dressing the wounds of great hulking bloodstained brutes from whom they would normally have run at sight.[11]

Echoing Father Shanks, a Baramulla-based Hindu who was in the convent throughout the crisis, in reply to my question, wrote to assert that 'to my personal knowledge, there was no case of rape, or sexual assault on any nun, or woman in the Convent, up to the time we were evacuated'. Yet the evidence is uncertain, for another brief—but apparently well-informed—contemporary clerical account of the attack in the Mill Hill archive recorded that the daughter of this same prominent local family 'was taken into a room with several men and it is feared that she was shamefully outraged'.[12] Sister Emilia's own testimony was elliptical. On my first meeting with her, Emilia, speaking in broken English, suggested that the attackers had sought to abduct some of the women. 'We prefer to die than to go in their own hand. I mean to take us away. First they say—go bazaar, take us into the bazaar. Nobody moving to go to the bazaar.' On a later occasion, she spoke of an incidence of violence against one of the nuns. 'One man was taking Sister, and I said where she was going . . . . I was afraid this man was doing bad thing for her. She was not young also.' But again, the exact meaning was elusive, and it would have been inappropriate to pry further.

Contemporary accounts in Indian newspapers gave prominence to reports of rape and abduction in Baramulla town, but did not suggest that any of the nuns or their patients had been victims. However, remarks by India's deputy prime minister Sardar Patel early in November 1947 about the tragedy befalling 'British' members of a religious order at Baramulla 'the details of which are too heart rending to state', clearly hinted at sexual assault. And this soon became the received wisdom. H.E. Bates made passing reference to rape in the convent in his novel *The Scarlet Sword*. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, in their high-octane account of the end of the British Raj, recounted how the Pathans in Baramulla 'were giving vent to their ancient appetites for rape and pillage. They violated the nuns, massacred the patients in their little clinic, looted the convent chapel down to its last brass door-knob.'[13]

Of greater moment is the account by General Stanley Menezes in his history of the Indian army that 'some nuns were raped'. Menezes, a Delhi-based staff officer in 1947, was involved in a formal court of inquiry into the death of Colonel Dykes, required so that his family could receive a military pension. He was based in Baramulla in 1950 and got to know both Father Shanks and several of the nuns. He recalled being told by one of the older nuns that four women were raped in the convent—two of those killed, Sister Teresalina and nurse Philomena, and two other nuns.[14]

Another military historian of the region, Brian Cloughley, became friendly with some of the Baramulla nuns while serving in the United Nations Military Observers' Group. He recorded a more nuanced conversation with Sister Priscilla. She told him: 'It is now like a dream, of course. I can't remember everything in detail. They were young and old; bearded, some of them, but others just boys. They destroyed all of the medicines, that was the worst part. The rape? I can't remember. I feel sorry for the men. I pray every day for them.'[15] That's how the issue is best left. Whatever the balance of probabilities, there is no conclusive evidence of the sexual assault of any of the women in the convent or hospital. But by the time the tribesmen climbed over the wall of St Joseph's, the all-pervading sense of terror which travelled ahead of them, and the very real military threat they posed to the Kashmiri capital, had already made its mark on the map of South Asia.

{6}

Signing up to India

Karan Singh had a close brush with destiny. As Sir Hari Singh's son and heir, born in the French resort of Cannes to his father's fourth wife, he would have been the maharaja of Kashmir had the Dogra dynasty survived. 'I certainly had no ambition to become a feudal monarch. In fact, I was saved from a fate worse than death by not having to be that, and to make it in a fully democratic society on my own.'[1] Karan Singh demonstrated in his career many of the qualities his father so sorely lacked—articulate, confident and clever. He has been a parliamentarian and cabinet minister, once had ambitions for India's presidency, and with his broad horizons and commanding intellect has become one of his country's elder statesmen. So much so that he has often been reluctant to talk about Kashmir. He has insisted that his stage stretches far beyond the princely state his father once ruled.

Nevertheless, the feudalism he despised gave him a leg up in life. His first volume of autobiography was entitled *Heir Apparent*. His first public office was achieved entirely through the accident of birth. In 1949, with his father informally excluded from Jammu and Kashmir, he became regent. Three years later, Karan Singh was named Sadar-i-Riyasat, the titular head of state under Indian Kashmir's new Constitution. The Dogra monarchy had been abolished but in a sense he became the constitutional ruler his father never was. He reached that elevated position at the ridiculously young age of twenty-one, and mentioned in his memoirs how the usual age limitation of thirty-five had to be relaxed for his benefit.[2] Less than a year later, he was the man who—with Delhi's blessing—dismissed Sheikh Abdullah as Kashmir's prime minister. The 'Lion of Kashmir' spent most of the next twenty-two years in detention. Although groomed for power, Karan Singh was not fully prepared for it. In his autobiography, he recorded that it was only when he went to New York for medical treatment at the close of 1947 that he first saw snowfall—as a child he had never spent a winter in the Kashmir Valley. And it was

also on that trip to New York that he first got to talk to Sheikh Abdullah, who was there as part of India's delegation to the United Nations. They had never met in Kashmir.

Karan Singh has made no secret of the fact that he was not close to his father, whom he found remote and severe. It was the tribal incursion, he told me, which forced his father to abandon the vision of an independent Kashmir (a dream which he believed was encouraged by a Hindu holy man whose devotee the maharaja became), and to accede to India. 'I don't think he ever expected that this sort of invasion would come. Maybe he should have expected it. But he didn't, evidently. It was a Pakistan-inspired and financed invasion. And these tribesmen from the Frontier province were let in to take Kashmir. It was a fruit ripe for the plucking. And they just came and thought they would take it over. What it succeeded in doing was to force my father, more or less, to accede to India. That's not what Pakistan had planned, I presume'—he laughed aloud at the thought. 'It was really the invasion which, as it were, clinched the issue.' A maharaja renowned for being indecisive was forced to make up his mind.

It's not hard to see why Sir Hari Singh had no enthusiasm for acceding to either of the new dominions. Pakistan showed signs of being the more indulgent to princely rulers, but it was a nation with an explicitly religious identity founded on the basis that the region's Muslims formed a nation rather than a community. While most Kashmiris were Muslim, the maharaja was a Hindu. His court, ministers and senior administrators were preponderantly non-Muslim. His army was largely non-Muslim, and its senior officers even more so. Almost a quarter of his citizens were not Muslims, and these included the maharaja's own community, the Dogras of Jammu. From the start, Pakistan proved to be uncongenial territory for non-Muslims. Almost all Sikhs in Pakistan who survived the communal riots migrated to India—some of those from the Frontier moved into or through Kashmir. By far the greater number of Pakistan's Hindus also left. West Punjab, which once had a composite population, became monocultural, with a tiny Hindu community and next-to-no Sikhs. The mandirs and gurdwaras in cities such as Lahore no longer had any Hindu or Sikh worshippers. The population movement from Indian Punjab was almost as complete, with Muslims reduced to no more than one per cent of the population.

By the late autumn of 1947, the scale of the population movement precipitated by Partition was all too evident. Sir Hari Singh could hardly be confident that if Kashmir became part of Pakistan, his non-Muslim subjects would feel secure as Pakistani citizens. And while some of his

Muslim subjects—notably those in areas such as Poonch, Jammu and Muzaffarabad—would probably have welcomed becoming part of Pakistan, opinion in the Valley was much more difficult to judge. Mehr Chand Mahajan, the Indian lawyer who took over as Kashmir's prime minister in mid-October 1947, was convinced that the maharaja would not sign-up for Pakistan under any circumstances. 'He could not close his eyes to what had happened in Pakistan to the Hindu population nor forget how the property of every Hindu had been looted and almost the entire Hindu population massacred,' Mahajan wrote. 'He did not want such scenes to be enacted in his State, where Hindus and Muslims were at that time living like brothers even when massacres were going on in Pakistan.'[3]

The Pakistan government sent a representative, Major A.S.B. Shah, to Srinagar to try to argue the case for accession and win over the Kashmir government. It also kept open channels of communication with Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference. Major Shah reported a sharp rebuff. 'He said that for 3 or 4 days he was succeeding,' Sir George Cunningham, the governor of the Frontier Province, recorded after meeting Shah in Peshawar, 'but that the new Prime Minister [Mahajan] arrived and told him to clear out. He . . . thinks that aggression on Kashmir will make HARI SINGH join INDIA, and that that might very probably lead on to war in the next three or four months.'[4] Major Shah's judgement, shared by Sir George, was spot on.

The option of joining India, however, was hardly more attractive to the maharaja. The Indian government was headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, a close friend and associate of the maharaja's sharpest political critic, Sheikh Abdullah. Sir Hari Singh had tried to stop Nehru entering the princely state in the summer of 1946 after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest, and when this failed, he ordered the detention of the man who was to become India's first prime minister. This was not an act of statesmanship, and did not bode well for relations between India and the Kashmir court. Sir Hari's son, who had been inspired by Nehru's political writings and came to view him as a mentor, was horrified: 'instead of welcoming [Nehru] and seeking his co-operation, we had arrested him. I have no doubt that his arrest was the turning point in the history of the State.'[5] Sheikh Abdullah, who was head of the Congress-aligned States People's Conference, had been jailed for urging the deposition of the Dogra dynasty. Nehru had made clear his support for Sheikh Abdullah, and the campaign for responsible government in Kashmir. So for Sir Hari Singh, signing up to India would be akin to handing over power to his political nemesis—which is exactly what happened eventually.[6]

Caught between a rock and a hard place, and attracted in any event by the prospect of independence, the maharaja had every reason to stave off a decision on accession. He persisted in playing for time even when Lord Mountbatten during his visit to Srinagar in the summer of 1947, in snatched moments in the back of the car, advised Sir Hari to forget any thought of independence. Lord Mountbatten also—according to both his press attaché and the secretary of India's states ministry—told the maharaja that if he acceded to Pakistan, the Indian government had assured him they would not take this amiss.[7] The working assumption of some British diplomats and administrators appears to have been that Kashmir's Muslim majority and communication and trade links would oblige the state to join Pakistan. That was certainly the view of Mountbatten's predecessor as viceroy, Lord Wavell, who subsequently stated that he had 'always assumed . . . that Kashmir would go to Pakistan'. It was also the expectation of one of Mountbatten's inner circle, Alan Campbell-Johnson, who was advised when he arrived in India in March 1947 that 'the Maharaja would no doubt be tempted to throw in his lot with Jinnah'.[8] Aligning with Pakistan appears to have been the advice proffered by the Kashmiri pandit who was the maharaja's prime minister through much of the summer of 1947, Ram Chandra Kak. He shared the maharaja's desire for autonomy, but leaned towards a tie-up with Karachi (then the capital of Pakistan) rather than Delhi. If Partition had been a more orderly process, it is possible that the maharaja might have followed this course, but the intense communal violence which accompanied the transfer of power put paid to any chance of Sir Hari Singh voluntarily plumping for Pakistan.

Through the summer and autumn of 1947, the maharaja took a series of steps which suggested that he was edging towards India. Foremost among them was his dismissal of Kak as prime minister in mid-August, and his eventual replacement two months later by Mahajan, who was dead set against accepting overtures from Karachi. Mehr Chand Mahajan had been a Congress nominee on the Boundary Commission which considered the precise demarcation of the Partition line dissecting Punjab. It would have been outlandish to imagine that a lawyer primed to get the best possible deal for India on that commission would, a matter of weeks later, allow the considerable prize of Kashmir to slip through Delhi's fingers.

There were many other straws in the wind. Mahajan had talks in Delhi with India's leaders before taking up his post, but turned down an invitation from Pakistan to visit Lahore. The maharaja welcomed visitors from Delhi such as Mahatma Gandhi while repeatedly rebuffing Jinnah's suggestions that he make a personal visit to Kashmir. He sought an Indian

army officer on secondment to replace the British commander of the state's armed forces. His government sought arms and ammunition from India, which the Indian defence ministry was eager to supply but was thwarted by the British-staffed supreme headquarters. The road from Pathankot to Jammu, the only road link between India and Kashmir, was upgraded urgently, much to the consternation of the authorities in Pakistan. The Indian authorities sought to provide the petrol that should have come via Pakistan, but never made it with the breakdown of the standstill agreement. The growing war of words between Srinagar and Karachi about the failure to provide promised supplies of essential commodities and the collapse of postal, telegram and banking services, compounded by mutual accusations of complicity in communal violence or insurgency, was hardly likely to serve as a precursor to accession.

There have been suggestions that the maharaja had decided by August 1947, or certainly by mid-September, that he had no option but to join India, and that he was just waiting for the best moment and the most advantageous terms. There are snippets of evidence to support this assertion. M.C. Mahajan, then Kashmir's prime minister-designate, met Nehru in Delhi in mid-September to discuss the state's future. 'I told him the terms on which the Maharaja wanted me to negotiate with India,' Mahajan recorded. 'The Maharaja was willing to accede to India and also to introduce necessary reforms in the administration of the State. He, however, wanted the question of administrative reforms to be taken up later on. [Nehru] wanted an immediate change in the internal administration of the State and he felt somewhat annoyed when I conveyed to him the Maharaja's views. Pandit Nehru also asked me to see that Sheikh Abdulla[h] was released.' This appears to have been a testing of the waters rather than a firm decision by the maharaja to sign up to India—certainly Nehru wasn't greatly reassured by the conversation. Nevertheless, it was increasingly clear that if Maharaja Hari Singh was going to accede to either Dominion, it would be to India.[9] In Pakistan, the newspaper Jinnah had founded, *Dawn*, carried as its main news item on 14 October an article with the headline: 'Kashmir's accession to Indian Dominion regarded as a foregone conclusion'. The following week Margaret Parton of the *New York Herald Tribune*, newly arrived in Kashmir from Peshawar, wrote home to say that 'the Hindu Maharaja is determined to join the Indian Union . . . . More fighting is inevitable if the tribes from the Frontier carry out their threat to march into Kashmir if it joins India—which they couldn't do until next Spring, but which they could certainly do then.'[10] The invasion, however, was not months away—

it started two days later. Even if there had been no tribal attack, Sir Hari Singh might well eventually have committed his princely state to India. What is certain is that the tribesmen's approach forced his hand, obliging him to sign up in a hurry and depriving him of the opportunity to haggle over the conditions.

The maharaja and his new prime minister arrived at Srinagar airfield on 23 October at the end of a tour of some of the violence-affected areas of Jammu province. Jammu had been beset by an armed rebellion against the maharaja, and by intense anti-Muslim violence in which the maharaja's forces were reported to be complicit.[11] On landing in Srinagar, they were told about the scale of the tribal raid launched very early the previous day. They initially appear to have believed that the state forces would be sufficient to repulse the invaders, perhaps unaware that a considerable number of the maharaja's Muslim troops had either mutinied or deserted. As soon as the seriousness of the tribal invasion became apparent, there was frenzied diplomatic activity.

The maharaja sent a senior member of his administration, R.L. Batra, to Delhi to appeal to the Indian government for help. There has been much mystery about the scope of Batra's mission. The prime minister, M.C. Mahajan, recorded in his memoirs that Batra left Srinagar for Delhi on 24 October 'carrying a letter of accession to India from the Maharaja and a personal letter to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and another to Sardar Patel asking for military help in men, arms and ammunition'.[12] The timing of the maharaja's accession to India is of some consequence, and has been the subject of enormous diplomatic and scholarly controversy. But no one has suggested that the maharaja signed up to India as early as 24 October. And until very recently, there was no sign of Batra's letter. It emerged in 2003 in the remarkable form of an e-mail attachment sent to a colleague of mine at the BBC World Service, in circumstances which do not entirely resolve the question of authenticity but point to the likelihood that it is genuine. The unevenly typed letter, on headed paper, is dated 23 October 1947:

> I hereby authorise my Deputy Prime Minister, R.B. Ram Lal Batra to sign the document of accession of the State with the Indian Union on my behalf, subject to the condition that the terms of accession will be the same as would be settled with H.E.H. The Nizam of Hyderabad.[13]

The letter is signed by Hari Singh in his own hand, and underneath is typed 'MAHARAJA OF JAMMU & KASHMIR'. For a document of

this moment, it looks a little tawdry, as if it was put together in a hurry, which was no doubt the case. The letter does not, of course, amount to a formal accession to India. For one thing, a precisely worded form had been prepared for princely rulers for this purpose. For another, this was an offer of accession, and it was conditional—and the basis of that condition, the settling of terms for the ruler of Hyderabad to bring his state into the Indian Union, was never achieved.

All the same, this is an important document. It is the key missing piece in the complex jigsaw of how and when the maharaja of Kashmir signed up to India, and is likely to be the item which some contemporaries referred to as an accession document, to the confusion of commentators and historians. The letter R.L. Batra carried to Delhi is clear evidence that as soon as the maharaja learnt of the scale of the tribal invasion, he set in motion moves not simply to secure India's military assistance but to accede. His ambition to achieve Kashmir's independence was quickly abandoned. It appears to be the first clear-cut written statement by the maharaja that he intended his principality to become part of India. Whether Hari Singh somewhat naively expected that the letter he gave his deputy prime minister would be sufficient to secure accession, or whether it was simply designed as a declaration of intent, is not clear. It was certainly the case that on 23 October 1947, it looked as if a deal was all but done to secure Hyderabad's accession to India. So the condition that the maharaja specified in his letter was not unrealistic. It was, ironically, the violence in Kashmir which in part persuaded the nizam's counsellors not to accede—and Hyderabad was eventually absorbed by force into India in September 1948.[14]

Jawaharalal Nehru, India's prime minister—in his broadcast to the nation on the Kashmir crisis in early November—recounted that it 'was on the 24th night that for the first time a request was made to us on behalf of the Kashmir State for accession and military help'.[15] Nehru passed on word of the crisis to Mountbatten that same Friday evening, at a buffet dinner in Delhi in honour of the Siamese foreign minister. He also convened a meeting of the Indian cabinet's defence committee for 11 a.m. the next morning. The committee had been established less than a month earlier, and Mountbatten—in something of a constitutional novelty for a Governor General, even one who had secured the wartime rank of supreme commander in South-East Asia—had been asked to chair the committee 'in view of his knowledge and experience of high military matters'.

At that cabinet committee, ministers heard of the scale of the threat posed by the advancing raiders, and discussed the strategic and tactical

merits of either sending troops directly in response to the maharaja of Kashmir's appeal, or promising to do so once he had acceded to India, or of accepting his accession on a temporary basis pending a demonstration of popular support in Kashmir for joining India. The minutes of that meeting do not fully capture what appears to have been Mountbatten's decisive contribution to the discussion. 'He considered that it would be the height of folly to send troops into a neutral State, where we had no right to send them, since Pakistan could do exactly the same thing, which could only result in a clash of armed forces and in war,' recorded Mountbatten's press attaché. 'He therefore argued that if indeed they were determined to send in troops, the essential prerequisite was accession, and unless it was made clear that this accession was not just an act of acquisition, this in itself might touch off a war.'[16] The defence committee sent V.P. Menon from the states ministry to Srinagar that same day. His task was to explain that India would send troops, but only once the maharaja had acceded to India, and to again underline the argument that Sheikh Abdullah must be brought in from the cold. At the same time, India's chiefs of staff were directed to prepare plans for the possibility of flying Indian troops to Srinagar.

Menon flew to Kashmir accompanied by representatives of India's army and air force, whose role was to assess the situation on the ground and liaise with what was left of Kashmir's own armed forces. By the time he reached Srinagar, the mood in the city—and in the palace in particular—had become grave. In spite of the approach of the tribesmen, the maharaja and his ministers had decided to proceed with a twice-annual durbar, or ceremony of allegiance, in Srinagar. This appears to have taken place on Friday, 24 October, the day after Maharaja Hari Singh's return to his capital. It happened just as the raiders either captured the princely state's power house at Mahura, on the Valley road between Uri and Baramulla, or were sufficiently close to cause its workers to flee. In any event, on that Friday evening the power supply from Mahura failed and the Kashmir Valley was plunged into darkness.

Among those at the court ceremony was D.N. Kaul, a lean and angular retired police officer when I met him at his Delhi home, and at that time an assistant superintendent in Srinagar. A Kashmiri Hindu, he remained in the Valley until 1990 when, along with so many other Hindus, he fled. On the October day that Mahura fell, D.N. Kaul was at the palace.

> The maharaja was conducting his Dussehra durbar, where all gazetted officers are supposed to offer him a sovereign or half a sovereign

> depending on their status to show allegiance to the maharaja. And I was also one of the crowd. As soon as we emerged out of the durbar hall, the lights went off. I said: hello, what has happened? And somebody said: why are you surprised, probably the raiders have captured the Mahura power station. Which was a damn fact! They had captured the power station, which was about sixty miles from Srinagar, and the whole city was plunged in darkness.

Karan Singh, the crown prince of Kashmir, also vividly recalled the sense of foreboding prompted by the power failure:

> I happened to have been incapacitated as a result of a hip ailment and I was in a wheelchair. And there was a durbar going on, this very big ceremonial biannual gathering where my father sat on the golden throne and everybody paid homage. And everybody was out of the palace, and I was there alone. And suddenly all the lights went off, and we were plunged into darkness. And I recall that there was this terrible cacophony of jackals, howling in the darkness. And it was really a very eerie, sort of weird moment. One had heard that there was trouble brewing but it was at that moment that one realised an invasion was underway.[17]

The Dussehra dinner was able to go ahead—according to the prime minister, M.C. Mahajan—because that particular royal building had its own power supply, but he recalled that the collapse of the power supply to the city, and apparent imminence of the raiders, provoked alarm, and prompted many in the administration to flee the city.

The panic was evident in the palace more than on the streets. The prospect of the tribesmen reaching Srinagar brought with it not simply the probable overthrow of the Dogra monarchy but, given what was already known about the killing and destruction at Muzaffarabad and elsewhere, the likely targeting of non-Muslims, the royal family included, and the sacking of the Kashmiri capital. When V.P. Menon reached Srinagar, he found a city that was quiet, but deeply anxious. Sheikh Abdullah's supporters had moved to fill the power vacuum caused by the near collapse of the civil administration. 'Over everything hung an atmosphere of impending calamity.'

> From the aerodrome we went straight to the residence of the Prime Minister of the State. The road leading from the aerodrome to

> Srinagar was deserted. At some of the street corners I noticed volunteers of the National Conference [Sheikh Abdullah's party] with lathis [sticks] who challenged passers-by; but the State police were conspicuous by their absence. Mehr Chand Mahajan apprised us of the perilous situation and pleaded for the Government of India to come to the rescue of the State. Mahajan, who is usually self-possessed, seemed temporarily to have lost his equanimity. From his residence we both proceeded to the Maharajah's palace. The Maharajah was completely unnerved by the turn of events and by his sense of lone helplessness.[18]

'It could be said,' Menon reported back to the Indian cabinet's defence committee the next morning, 'that the Maharaja had gone to pieces completely—if not gone off his head.' The army officer on the mission, Lieutenant Colonel Sam Manekshaw, accompanied Menon to the palace. 'I have never seen such disorganization in my life. The Maharaja was running around from one room to the other. I have never seen so much jewellery in my life—pearl necklaces, ruby things, lying in one room; packing here, there, everywhere. There was a convoy of vehicles. The Maharaja was coming out of one room, and going into another saying, "Alright, if India doesn't help, I will go and join my troops and fight [it] out".'[19] It's not clear whether V.P. Menon was able to have any discussions of substance with the maharaja about accession, but he certainly urged Sir Hari Singh to leave Srinagar with his family and moveable wealth and head south to the relative safety of the city of Jammu, his winter capital.

In the small hours of Sunday, 26 October, a long convoy of vehicles headed out of the palace on the arduous drive across the Banihal pass and beyond. Karan Singh recalled a sad, slow journey to Jammu, taking many hours:

> Finally the convoy began to move. My father drove his own car with Victor Rosenthal at his side and two staff officers with loaded revolvers in the back seat. My mother followed with the ladies in several cars. I was in no position to get into a car because of the heavy plaster cast, so my wheel chair was lifted and placed in the back of one of the station wagons that my father used for his shikar [hunting] expeditions. It was bitterly cold as the convoy pulled out of the palace in the early hours of the morning . . . . The journey was interminable, with numerous stops en route . . .

> All through that dreadful night we drove, slowly, haltingly, as if reluctant to leave the beautiful Valley that our ancestors had ruled for generations. Our convoy crawled over the 9,000 ft Banihal Pass just as first light was beginning to break. . . . Victor told me later that throughout the journey my father spoke not a word as he drove. When the next evening he finally reached Jammu and pulled up at the palace he uttered but one sentence—'We have lost Kashmir'.[20]

The Dogra dynasty had indeed, to all practical effect, lost Kashmir. Many Kashmiris saw the flight of the royal family as an abandonment of the Kashmir Valley. 'Everybody was furious,' remembered Leela Thompson, then in Srinagar. She recalled people saying that the maharaja was 'running away, that he was abandoning everybody, that he was a coward. Saving his own skin, that's what we all thought.' There was something of a stampede among officials and the more privileged citizens to get out of Srinagar, though few had vehicles and even fewer had adequate supplies of petrol. V.P. Menon pointedly recalled that when he and Prime Minister Mahajan tried to reach to Srinagar's airfield on the morning of 26 October to fly to Delhi, getting there proved difficult. 'The Majarajah had taken away all the available cars and the only transport available was an old jeep. Into this were bundled Mahajan, myself and the air crew of six or seven.' The airfield itself was thronged with people desperately trying to get a flight out of Kashmir.

Once in Delhi at breakfast time on Sunday morning, V.P. Menon took Mahajan to see Nehru and his deputy, Sardar Patel. Mahajan pleaded for an immediate Indian military intervention to save Srinagar. Nehru appeared to equivocate, to which Mahajan recalled responding: 'Give us the military force we need. Take the accession and give whatever power you desire to the popular party. The army must fly to save Srinagar this evening or else I will go to Lahore and negotiate terms with Mr. Jinnah.' This intemperate outburst provoked an angry rebuke from Nehru—but he quickly changed his tone. 'Just then, a piece of paper was passed over to the Prime Minister. He read it and in a loud voice said, "Sheikh Sahib also says the same thing,"' Mahajan recalled.[21] Sheikh Abdullah had been listening in on the conversation from an adjoining room, and intervened to endorse Mahajan's appeal for a military airlift.

This almost comic off-stage intervention by Nehru's friend and ally appears to have won over the Indian prime minister to immediate military intervention in Kashmir. At the cabinet defence committee meeting later

that morning, Menon and Manekshaw reported on the situation in Srinagar. The Indian government decided that in spite of the grave risks underlined by the army's commander-in-chief, General Lockhart, an infantry battalion would be flown to Srinagar the next morning, 27 October, in air force and requisitioned civil planes. The states ministry was directed to prepare an instrument of accession for the maharaja and a letter emphasising that its acceptance would be temporary pending the ascertaining of the will of the people. It was also instructed to take up with Sir Hari the issue 'of the formation, simultaneously with the signing of the Instrument of Accession, of an Interim Government under Sheikh Abdullah'.

From this point on, the story of Kashmir's accession to India becomes clouded by conflicting accounts and interpretations. The issue in dispute is whether Kashmir's maharaja signed the document acceding to India before or after the beginning of India's military airlift to Srinagar on the morning of Monday, 27 October. It can and has been argued that this is of little consequence. Indian troops were not invading Kashmir, but responding to repeated and urgent requests for help from its ruler. He had already made clear, in writing, that he wished to accede to India. There is no real dispute that Sir Hari Singh did sign up to India at some time twenty-four hours either side of his night-and-day car journey to Jammu, and that constitutionally—if not necessarily morally—the accession was legitimate. From the contrary perspective, it seems clear that even if the maharaja had already signed, the process of accession was not complete when the airlift began. Lord Mountbatten's signature on the document accepting the accession is dated 27 October. It is implausible that he signed before Indian troops took off for Srinagar at first light that morning, and odds against that he signed before they arrived, probably at around 9 a.m. What makes the issue of the maharaja's signature of continuing relevance is that India has built its case on Kashmir around a version of events that insists that the instrument of accession was signed before the airlift of troops. If that is not true, then India's case is diminished—because its account of the accession is inaccurate, because that inaccuracy can only have been introduced by those acting for the Indian government, and because the crucial point in India's diplomatic armoury, that its military intervention in Kashmir was a deployment within the Indian Union, becomes clouded.

The established Indian account of the signing is contained in the government's *White Paper on Jammu & Kashmir*, published in March 1948:

> Indian troops were sent to Kashmir by air on the 27th, following the signing of the Instrument of Accession on the previous night.
>
> The accession was legally made by the Maharaja of Kashmir, and this step was taken on the advice of Sheikh Abdullah, leader of the All-Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, the political party commanding the widest popular support in the State. Nevertheless, in accepting the accession, the Government of India made it clear that they would regard it as purely provisional until such time as the will of the people of the State could be ascertained.[22]

V.P. Menon, secretary of India's states ministry, provided chapter and verse in his book *Integration of the Indian States*. He recounted how, shortly after the defence committee meeting in Delhi on the morning of Sunday, 26 October:

> I flew to Jammu accompanied by Mahajan. On arrival at the palace I found it in a state of utter turmoil with valuable articles strewn all over the place. The Maharajah was asleep; he had left Srinagar the previous evening and had been driving all night. I woke him up and told him of what had taken place at the Defence Committee meeting. He was ready to accede at once. He then composed a letter to the Governor-General describing the pitiable plight of the State and reiterating his request for military help. He further informed the Governor-General that it was his intention to set up an interim government at once and to ask Sheikh Abdullah to carry the responsibilities in this emergency with Mehr Chand Mahajan, his Prime Minister. He concluded by saying that if the State was to be saved, immediate assistance must be available at Srinagar. He also signed the Instrument of Accession . . .
>
> With the Instrument of Accession and the Maharajah's letter I flew back at once to Delhi. Sardar [Patel] was waiting at the aerodrome and we both went straight to a meeting of the Defence Committee which was arranged for that evening. There was a long discussion, at the end of which it was decided that the accession of Jammu and Kashmir should be accepted, subject to the proviso that a plebiscite would be held in the State when the law and order situation allowed. It was further decided that an infantry battalion should be flown to Srinagar the next day.[23]

But it seems that while Menon tried to get to Jammu on that Sunday, he didn't manage it, and that whatever ministerial discussions took place, there was no formal evening meeting of the Indian cabinet's defence committee. What is more, the maharaja did not reach Jammu after his arduous road journey from Srinagar until late in the day. Menon's account, to put it bluntly, is misleading.

An enormous amount of scholarly energy has been put into tracking the movements of the cast of the Kashmir accession drama on the crucial days in question. The consensus now of the most detailed historical accounts, those generally sympathetic to India as well as those better disposed to Pakistan, is that Menon did not reach Jammu on 26 October, and so could not have secured the maharaja's signature on the instrument of accession in the manner he described.[24] The testimony of Alexander Symon, Britain's deputy high commissioner in New Delhi, is of particular importance. Symon tried to see Menon before he flew to Jammu that afternoon. 'I was told that the aeroplane was leaving from Palam aerodrome to which place I went at once. I found Mr Menon on the point of returning to Delhi because he had left it too late for the aeroplane to reach Kashmir before nightfall. I arranged with Mr Menon to see him at his house at 5 p.m.' When Symon called on V.P. Menon at the appointed time, an hour and a half after their encounter at Palam, Menon said that 'he would leave next morning for Jammu and would be returning by lunch-time next day'. At 4 the following afternoon, Symon noted that he had 'telephoned to Mr V.P. Menon's office a few minutes ago but was told that he had not yet returned from Jammu'.[25]

The account of Kashmir's prime minister, M.C. Mahajan, also contradicts V.P. Menon's version of events. 'The Cabinet meeting in the evening [of 26 October],' Mahajan wrote in his autobiography, 'affirmed the decision of the Defence Council to give military aid to the Maharaja to drive out the tribesmen':

> Around dinner time, the Prime Minister [Nehru] sent a message to me that with Mr V.P. Menon, I should fly to Jammu to inform the Maharaja of this decision and also get his signature on certain supplementary documents about the accession. I frankly informed him that I was not prepared to go to Jammu till I got news from my aerodrome officer at Srinagar that the Indian forces had landed there. Panditji did not insist and said, 'You can fly to Jammu next morning.'[26]

And that's what Mahajan and Menon did. Mahajan was staying in Delhi at the home of India's defence minister, Baldev Singh:

> In the early hours of the morning of the 27th, I could hear the noise of the planes flying over Sardar Baldev Singh's house and carrying the military personnel to Srinagar. At about 9 A. M. I got a message from the aerodrome officer of Srinagar that troops had landed there and had gone into action. On receipt of this message, I flew to Jammu with Mr V.P. Menon . . . . After some discussion, formal documents were signed which Mr. Menon took back to New Delhi . . .[27]

This suggests that the accession papers were signed a day later than the Indian official version states, once Indian troops were already on the ground in Srinagar. The implication is that V.P. Menon doctored his account of securing the instrument of accession to make it fit with the already widely circulated Indian official narrative that the maharaja had signed the document before the military airlift began.

It's not quite that simple. The Indian writer and historian Prem Shankar Jha has written a detailed account of the crisis which both accepts that V.P. Menon did not travel to Jammu on 26 October and asserts that Kashmir's maharaja did sign before the airlift. He argues that Menon persuaded the maharaja to sign the instrument of accession late on 25 October or in the 'first hours' of the following day, before the royal family left Srinagar. Menon brought the document with him to Delhi the next morning, Jha suggests, but did not present it formally to the defence committee because of a difference between Nehru and his deputy, Sardar Patel. While Patel wanted Kashmir's accession as soon as possible, and was happy to talk about political reform later, Nehru insisted that the maharaja should commit himself to bring Sheikh Abdullah into government as a condition of receiving Indian help. So Menon kept quiet about the maharaja signing the accession, concerned that Nehru would reject it if not accompanied by a clear statement of intent about the future government of the state, and returned to Jammu on Monday, 27 October, to get the maharaja's signature to a covering letter sufficient to reassure Nehru. It was a 'Byzantine intrigue in the Indian government'. In the meantime, the maharaja's clear intention to accede to India, and the pleadings of both M.C. Mahajan and Sheikh Abdullah, were sufficient to convince Nehru, and through him the defence committee, of the need for an immediate despatch by air of Indian troops.

Jha's account, while not entirely implausible, has the feel of facts being pulled and squeezed to fit a hypothesis. There was certainly a sharp difference of emphasis on Kashmir between Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru. While Patel developed a cordial and strong relationship with the maharaja, Nehru had little time for him and saw Sheikh Abdullah as the embodiment of hopes for a democratic and stable Kashmir. But given the urgency of the despatch of Indian troops to safeguard Kashmir and save Srinagar (which, as Mountbatten was keenly aware, had up to 400 British residents among its population of approaching a quarter of a million), and Mountbatten's emphasis on the constitutional propriety of securing accession before sending troops, it would have been remarkable for Menon to sit through a meeting of the defence committee without mentioning his success with the maharaja, to the extent of being party to an instruction to prepare a document that he knew had already been signed.

Jha points to several accounts which he suggests support the notion that the maharaja of Kashmir signed the accession document before leaving Srinagar. Those of Mountbatten's press attaché, Alan Campbell-Johnson, and of Mahajan are, respectively, fleeting and inconsistent on this crucial point. The evidence in which Jha reposes most faith is that of Colonel Manekshaw, who accompanied Menon to Srinagar. Manekshaw says of that visit: 'Eventually the Maharaja signed the accession papers and we flew back in the Dakota late at night.' He added: 'I did not see the Maharaja signing it, nor did I see Mahajan. All I do know is that V.P. Menon turned around and said, "Sam, we've got the Accession."'[28] Manekshaw's reminiscences, however, set down forty-seven years after the event, are so unreliable on other matters which are not in controversy—notably the day on which Indian troops were sent into Kashmir, and the location of the tribal invaders at the time of his visit—that it is hazardous to place too much reliance on them.

And then there is the simple objection of the evidence of the document itself. The whereabouts of the original instrument of accession has at times been unclear. A copy of the crucial page bearing Maharaja Hari Singh's and Lord Mountbatten's signatures was published in the 1970s as a frontispiece to a volume of Sardar Patel's correspondence. More recently, the entire document has been posted on the Indian ministry of home affairs website, though it remains unavailable for detailed inspection.[29] The maharaja's signature is unambiguously dated 26 October. It could have been signed in the early hours of 26 October, just as the maharaja was leaving his capital. But the letter accompanying the instrument of accession, also dated 26 October, was written from The

Palace, Jammu, which the maharaja only reached quite late in the day. It is easier to imagine Menon prevailing on the maharaja to append a date a day earlier than that of the signature to help India's case, rather than to envisage the circumstances in which the maharaja would post-date his signature.

Sir Hari Singh's letter to Mountbatten was a powerfully expressed plea for help. 'The number of women who have been kidnapped and raped makes my heart bleed. The wild forces thus let loose on the State are marching on with the aim of capturing Srinagar, the Summer Capital of my Government, as a first step to overrunning the whole State.' The maharaja sought India's help and confirmed his decision to join India, stating: 'I attach the Instrument of Accession for acceptance by your Government. The other alternative is to leave my State and my people to freebooters.' He expressed his intention to set up an interim government and ask Sheikh Abdullah to 'carry the responsibilities in this emergency' along with Kashmir's prime minister. The letter was quite probably written in Delhi, under the instructions issued by the defence committee, on the assumption that Menon would meet the maharaja on 26 October, and carried by Menon when he eventually went to Jammu the following day. If Hari Singh signed this letter on the Monday and acquiesced in it being dated the previous day, it is entirely feasible that he did the same with the accompanying instrument of accession.

Certainly Nehru clearly acted at the time as if the maharaja's signature was secured by V.P. Menon in Jammu on 27 October. On that day, Nehru wrote to the maharaja:

> Shri V.P. Menon returned from Jammu this evening and informed me of the talks there. He gave me the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill Agreement which you had signed, and I saw also your letter to the Governor General of India. Allow me to congratulate you on the wise decisions that you have taken.[30]

Nehru's letter to Sheikh Abdullah of the same day also mentioned that 'V.P. Menon came back from Jammu this evening bringing the agreement for accession . . . duly signed by the Maharaja of Kashmir.' It's impossible to pronounce with certainty, but the weight of evidence is that the maharaja had not formally signed up to India when the first Indian troops landed at Srinagar. He probably signed within a few hours of the beginning of the airlift. But the soldiers of the Sikh Regiment who spearheaded the operation were not, it seems, landing on Indian territory.[31]

The wording of Mountbatten's response to the maharaja's accession has also occasioned lasting controversy. It has often been described—at the time and subsequently—as a provisional, or conditional, or temporary acceptance of Kashmir's accession:

> . . . my Government have decided to accept the accession of Kashmir State to the Dominion of India. Consistently with their policy that, in the case of any State where the issue of accession has been the subject of dispute, the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the State, it is my Government's wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and her soil cleared of the invader, the question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people.

A few days later, Nehru pledged a plebiscite in Kashmir under international auspices. The idea was later taken up at the United Nations, and enshrined in Security Council resolutions. The plebiscite has never been held. While this means that Mountbatten's intention was frustrated, it does not invalidate Kashmir's accession to India. Intriguingly, the issue of a plebiscite to confirm accession was discussed at the cabinet's defence committee meeting on the morning of Sunday, 26 October—and the minutes record that the option of an independent Kashmir was still being discussed. 'It was agreed that when the accession was accepted this should be subject to the proviso that a plebiscite would be held in Kashmir when the law and order situation allowed this. The Governor-General suggested that this plebiscite should be on three questions—to join India—to join Pakistan—or to remain independent . . . . The Prime Minister said that the Government of India would not mind Kashmir remaining an independent country under India's sphere of influence.'[32] That's about the last that was heard in Delhi, or Karachi, about an independent Kashmir.

Both India and Pakistan have always been inclined to think the worst of each other over Kashmir. Both have developed elaborate conspiracy theories to depict the other as having long-planned military ambitions on Kashmir, stretching back well before the crisis of late October 1947. The Pakistani authorities were infuriated by India's airlift to Srinagar—which they heard about at the same time as news of Kashmir's accession to India. Jinnah was reluctant to accept that the airlift had been planned and organised within forty-eight hours—an achievement which Mountbatten described as without parallel in his military experience—and suspected a much longer history to the operation. To counter that,

Mountbatten asked the heads of all three wings of India's armed forces, at that time all British, to make a signed statement about the origins of the airlift, which he showed to Jinnah when they met in Lahore on 1 November. The chiefs of staff recorded:

> On 24th October the C-in-C, Indian Army, received information that tribesmen had seized Muzzaffarabad. This was the first indication of the raid.
>
> Prior to this date, no plans of any sort for sending Indian forces into Kashmir had been formulated or even considered. . . .
>
> On the afternoon of 26th October we finalised our plans for the despatch by air of troops to Kashmir.
>
> At first light on the morning of 27th October, with Kashmir's Instrument of Accession signed, the movement by air of Indian forces to Kashmir began.[33]

The commander-in-chief of the Indian Army, General Rob Lockhart, had received news of the tribal incursion by telegram from the headquarters of the Pakistan army—one of the most astonishing military aspects to the crisis was the level of liaison between senior British officers in the two armies. When he and the air force chief, Air Marshal Elmhirst, briefed the cabinet's defence committee on 26 October, they offered a litany of reasons why an immediate airlift of a battalion of Indian troops to Srinagar was a 'considerable military risk'—there was the issue of the availability of transport aircraft, they couldn't be sure that the Srinagar airfield would still be secure by the time planes arrived, the operation would divert military effort from relief work in Punjab, it would be difficult to supply a battalion once in Srinagar, it would not be able to take motor transport, and would be an insufficient force in the event of a 'general popular uprising' in Kashmir.

The operation was not for the faint-hearted. It was by far the most adventurous, ambitious, logistically complex, and politically risky military operation that India had undertaken since the transfer of power—the first real military test for independent India. The committee minutes give some indication of how the discussion was resolved. 'Finally, General Lockhart asked to what extent the Kashmir situation was vital to India. The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister both stated that the future of Kashmir was vital to India's very existence.'

The initial plan was to despatch to Kashmir a unit of the Gurkha Rifles. This posed two problems. The defence committee greatly preferred

sending an Indian battalion rather than Nepalese troops. And the Gurkhas had a number of British officers, raising the prospect of a row with London. The supreme commander to whom chiefs of staff in both India and Pakistan reported in the initial months of independence, Field Marshal Auchinleck, was busy reassuring the ministry of defence in London that in 'no circumstances will British forces be used for operational purposes to assist either Dominion in Kashmir or elsewhere. Orders to this effect have been in force since 15th August.'[34] So the 1st Battalion of the Sikh Regiment, which was then deployed at Gurgaon just outside Delhi, was drafted in. There was later some criticism, certainly from London, that Sikh soldiers were deployed in Kashmir against Muslim tribesmen who had a particular animosity towards Sikhs because of their perceived role in the communal slaughter in Punjab. It was seen as throwing fuel on the fire. But given the time constraints, India's chiefs of staff didn't have much option.

A signal to prepare for an airlift to Srinagar was sent to Lieutenant Colonel Ranjit Rai of the First Sikhs. That was followed by a detailed operational order, which reflected the uncertainty about the military situation Indian troops would find on arrival:

1. It is understood KASHMIR is acceding to the INDIAN UNION and that SHEIKH ABDULLAH is being invited to form a popular Govt.
2. Tribesmen, numbers and arms unknown but reliably reported to be in large numbers, reported moving on SRINAGAR from W and NW areas of state. Situation in SRINAGAR reliably reported 26 OCT to be deteriorating. . . .
4. . . . On arrival SRINAGAR you will
   (a) secure SRINAGAR airport and civil aviation wireless station
   (b) take such action as your first task and available troops allow to
      (i) drive tribesmen away from SRINAGAR and
      (ii) aid local Govt. in maintenance of law and order in SRINAGAR. . . .
16. If wireless com[munication] between you and SRINAGAR civil aviation centre is not established and you are not given the land signal, you will NOT land but go to JAMMU and land there. . . .
17. In the event of landing in JAMMU, you will . . . requisition local t[rans]p[or]t and send a recce on the route to SRINAGAR as close to SRINAGAR as it can go with safety and secure the route as far NORTH from JAMMU as possible.[35]

The troops were being despatched without any certainty that the security situation would allow the planes to land. Two Delhi airports, Palam and Willingdon, were used for the airlift. The First Sikhs were ordered to report to Palam airport at 4 a.m. on the morning of Monday, 27 October. The only planes suitable for the operation, given the modest nature of the Srinagar airstrip, were Dakotas. The Royal Indian Air Force did not have sufficient planes, so the defence ministry requisitioned DC3 Dakotas from civil airlines which as a result had to abandon most of their scheduled services around India. The military made use not only of civil planes, but also of pilots on contract to these airlines—so some of the early flights of Indian troops into Srinagar were flown by Australian, British and, it seems, American pilots. The British High Commission also organised an evacuation by air of British nationals from Srinagar, the planning for which—in a display of foresight not evident on the political front—had been under way for a couple of weeks.

Staff Officer S.K. Sinha was largely responsible for drawing up the operational order for the Sikh battalion, which their commander only received when he arrived at the airport, and for getting the initial detachment airborne. 'I arrived at Palam at about 3 a.m., an hour before the Sikhs were expected,' Sinha wrote in his military memoirs. 'With the cooperation of the aerodrome officials and some officers from the Delhi Area we started making arrangements for receiving the battalion. The aerodrome was floodlit to facilitate loading and we had tea ready for the troops. Ammunition, rations and ordnance stores were stacked at the airfield for issue to the unit. We were racing against time but fortunately things somehow worked all right and we had everything ready by the time Rai and his men arrived.' The first planes took off from Palam 'in the grey twilight' of dawn.[36] The Dakotas could carry at most seventeen men, with their personal arms, equipment and bedrolls, and a further 500 lbs of equipment. Major L.E.R.B. Ferris was on one of the early flights:

> The air-lift flight to the Valley of Kashmir was a nightmare. There was no information of any sort available as to what exactly was happening, where the raiders were, what was the plan of action, what personal kit was due to be taken and a hundred other queries which remained unanswered. In short we just did not know what to expect . . . . Aircraft from the various civil aviation lines were pressed into service. The luxury fittings were ripped out, comfortable chairs pulled out of their fixtures, and within minutes fully-armed troops clambered aboard—as many as could fit in . . . . The flight itself was uneventful. One had to squat on the deck of the Dakota and

> from such a position the windows were too high to look out and see the countryside below.[37]

The first plane touched down at Srinagar at around 9 that Monday morning. On board was Brigadier Hiralal Atal, who recalled that as the plane came in to land, the runway was thronged by people desperate to get a flight out of Srinagar. 'I was astonished to see a large multitude of human beings emerging as if from the earth; they had all taken cover—very effectively—in the nullahs and undulating ground surrounding the airport which was turf and not tarmaced.'

The Sikh troops began to land just an hour or two before the tribal forces attacked the Baramulla mission and killed one of their officers. The pilot of the first plane, fending off the would-be evacuees, took off from Srinagar to make a reconnaissance flight of the road to Baramulla, reporting back that 'there was no movement whatsoever on the road to Srinagar and that Baramula was aflame in places and smouldering in others'. The plane's fuel tank was struck by a bullet, but the airlift of troops continued. By the end of the day, twenty-eight sorties had been flown and about 300 soldiers of the Sikh Regiment had reached Srinagar.[38] Some modest forces under the Sikh maharaja of Patiala had already been deployed in Kashmir, but the Patiala troops seem not to have been integrated into the Indian armed forces and Delhi appears to have been unaware of their presence or considered it of little consequence. The Sikhs who jumped out of their Dakotas onto the none-too-even ground of the Srinagar landing strip were the first operational Indian soldiers to reach Kashmir. This was the beginning of India's military presence in what has become its most disaffected state.

The news of India's military deployment in Kashmir ricocheted around the world. In London, the *Daily Express* and the *Times*, helped by the time difference, got a couple of sentences from a Reuter's news agency flash about the airlift of Sikh troops into their later editions on that same morning. The Indian newspapers had been hinting at Kashmir's likely accession. The *Hindustan Times* on 27 October pointed to the likelihood of an 'important statement' on Kashmir in the coming forty-eight hours. But they had to wait until the next day to trumpet the news of the airlift, with both the *Statesman* and the *Hindustan Times* opting for the same banner headline: 'Kashmir Accedes to India'. By then, the Sikh troops had reached the front line, and the optimistic—and misleading—headline in the *Times of India* read: 'Indian Troops Rolling

Back Kashmir Rebels'. The exchange of letters between the maharaja and Lord Mountbatten had been released to the press. And the *Times of India* quoted Sheikh Abdullah, on his way back from Delhi to Srinagar, as saying that Kashmir was in dire peril, and the first duty of every Kashmiri was to defend his motherland against the intruder.

If India was upbeat both about securing Kashmir's accession and the prospect of beating back the tribal raiders, the authorities in Pakistan were furious at India's military intervention. The Indian government was dilatory in informing Pakistan of its deployment in Kashmir. Jinnah was in Lahore with the governor of West Punjab, Sir Francis Mudie. The British high commissioner to Pakistan reported to London that 'until Col. Craster, Military Secretary to the Governor of West Punjab, heard the news of the despatch of Indian troops to Srinagar over the wireless on October 27, and took it in to Jinnah and Mudie after dinner, they knew nothing of it. Jinnah's first reactions are known to you.'[39]

Jinnah's reaction was to take a step of enormous moment—he ordered Pakistan's army into Kashmir. Not simply a few more officers to assist the tribesmen, but a full-scale military mobilisation. This could only mean war. As Nehru had put it in a letter to a colleague on 27 October: 'Kashmir has now formally acceded to the Indian Union and we have accepted that accession. This makes a big difference in the constitutional position and if Pakistan Army goes into Kashmir State anywhere it means war. I rather doubt if they will do this . . . .'[40] At about the moment Nehru was committing that judgement to paper, Jinnah was trying to prove him wrong. The order to mobilise was made—through Sir Francis Mudie—to Pakistan's acting commander-in-chief General Douglas Gracey in Rawalpindi. He refused to obey, insisting first of all on consulting supreme headquarters in Delhi. There was a shouting match over the phone between Mudie and Gracey. The novelty of an army commander-in-chief refusing an order from his political master to mobilise until he had consulted with senior officers based in what could only be described in these circumstances as the enemy capital is astonishing.

Jinnah's instruction was to send Pakistani troops into Kashmir to seize Baramulla and the capital, Srinagar, to take the Banihal pass, the crucial strategic point on the road between Srinagar and Jammu, and to send forces into the Mirpur district where there was already an indigenous rebellion against the maharaja. Pakistan's army would not have required an airlift to reach Kashmir. Once orders had been issued and the logistics sorted out, the troops could have been in Kashmir within hours, well before

the Sikh Regiment had been able to muster in force and dig in effectively. At 1 at night, General Gracey phoned his supreme commander, Field Marshal Auchinleck, in Delhi, and told him of this dramatic turn of events. If pursued, the deployment of Pakistani troops in this manner would have entailed the issue of a 'stand down' order, the withdrawal of all British officers from both the Pakistan and Indian armies which—given Pakistan's acute shortage of senior officers, and staff officers in particular—would have been a very substantial blow.

The next morning, Auchinleck flew to Pakistan to meet Jinnah for what was certain to be a difficult and enormously sensitive meeting. India and Pakistan were on the brink of war. General Gracey travelled to Lahore from Rawalpindi. Sir George Cunningham came down from Peshawar. 'Found Government House LAHORE buzzing with Generals, including GRACEY, and a real flap,' he recorded in his diary. Auchinleck cabled a 'top secret' account of his talks to London later that day:

> 3. Met Jinnah who is in Lahore and discussed situation at length explaining situation vis a vis British officers very clearly. Gracey also emphasised military weakness of Pakistan while I pointed out incalculable consequences of military violation of what is now territory of Indian Union in consequence of Kashmir's sudden accession.
> 4. Jinnah withdrew orders but is very angry and disturbed by what he considers to be sharp practice by India in securing Kashmir's accession and situation remains explosive and highly dangerous in my opinion as further successes by irregular tribal forces now in Kashmir or massacre of Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir State by State Forces or Indian Union troops which are quite possible might so inflame feelings on both sides as to force open conflict. Control by Government in such circumstances likely to be ineffective . . .[41]

Still, for the moment, the crisis had eased, and Auchinleck was able to ring Mountbatten, at the time presiding over yet another meeting of the Indian cabinet's defence committee, to say that he had succeeded in persuading Jinnah to cancel the order for Pakistan's troops to be moved into Kashmir.

That averted the immediate prospect of war between India and Pakistan. But it did not imply that the Pakistan authorities were willing to accept the legitimacy of the maharaja's accession to India. Later in the

week, the Pakistan government issued a strongly worded communique alleging that 'the accession of Kashmir is based in fraud and violence and as such cannot be recognised'. And there was a real possibility that the Pakistan-backed tribal irregulars, because of their numerical superiority, might prevail against the still modest deployment of India's Sikh troops. As the airlift got under way, Lord Mountbatten, who had much more experience in war than any of the Indian cabinet, counselled Sardar Patel, India's deputy prime minister, of the military perils ahead. 'I must remind you,' he wrote, 'that the risk is great and that the chances of keeping the raiders out of Srinagar are not too good.' On that same day, Jawaharlal Nehru gave a graphic indication of the size of the stakes, declaring: 'It has become a test of our future.'[42]

{7}

Liberating Kashmir

Khan Shah Afridi always longed for what he regarded as the liberation of Kashmir. He went to fight there in 1947, and almost sixty years later its fate was still on his mind. 'I hope Allah may give freedom to Kashmir, and in my lifetime,' he declared, struggling for breath and in a voice little more than a whisper. 'This will be a source of great joy to us, for this is a Muslim area.' Khan Shah Afridi was living in advanced old age—he claimed to be 120, though his son thought he was born in 1906 or perhaps a little after—in a mud house in the village of Mattni to the south of Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province. He had lost the use of his legs, and spent much of the day lying on a loosely strung cot. He was almost blind and hard of hearing, with a wispy, white beard, and a pugri, a traditional turban, covering his bald head. And he was one of the last surviving veterans of the lashkar that invaded Kashmir in October 1947.

In his prime, Khan Shah must have been an imposing man, well over six feet tall, and even in his dotage he had an air of authority as he struggled to articulate his memories of war. 'We were asked by the Pir of Manki Sharif to come for fighting,' he recalled, talking of one of the Frontier's most prominent and politically active clerics. 'I was the pir's follower. I had a small shotgun at that time. Pir sahib told us we will fight and we should not be afraid—it is a war between Muslims and infidels and we will get Kashmir freed.' The Afridis, Mohmands and others of the Frontier tribes had headed to Kashmir, and Khan Shah Afridi, by his own account, was one of the coordinators of the operation. He was in charge of a group travelling in two vehicles. 'We had no army command with us. Each group had its own leader.' His role was in part to maintain the resolve of the tribesmen as they engaged in battle—and reading between the lines, that seems to have been quite a challenge. 'I used to tell them after an attack that you have come here to fight not to run away like chickens. You will not run.'

Looking back on events more than half a century earlier, clouded by the passage of time and by the legends that have come to surround the lashkar, Khan Shah Afridi gave an account of the invaders' travails that was something less than heroic. One old man's memories are not always the most reliable of sources, but the outline of his account appears convincing. Certainly, when his recollections can be tested against known facts and events, they match. For three or four days, he stated, the lashkar advanced. There was fighting in Uri, and then in Baramulla, where his men spent a night. They went further forward, to within a few miles of Srinagar. Kashmiri Muslims were welcoming, and provided bread, milk, whatever they could.

As for the treatment the lashkar meted out to non-Muslims, Khan Shah was matter-of-fact. They were sought out, and many were killed. 'We shot whoever we saw in Baramulla. We didn't know how many were killed. We forced Hindus to run for their lives.' And the fate of the town's Christian community, gathered at the mission? 'I remember Christians in Baramulla. Our leader Suhbat Khan was not a good man. He used to put hands on these people.' There was no rape, he insisted, but there was looting, adding somewhat defensively that another contingent of the tribal forces was largely to blame.

The loot and destruction, the indiscipline and the sexual menace were what many of the townspeople of Baramulla remembered of the invaders. Inayatullah, a local businessman in his mid-twenties at the time, had no reason to blackguard the tribesmen. He was active in the 1940s in the more pro-Pakistan of Kashmir's two main parties, the Muslim Conference, and had attended gatherings of Jinnah's Muslim League. The story he told me in his home in Baramulla—unverifiable, but etched in his memory—was remarkable.[1] At the time of the lashkar's advance into the Valley, Inayatullah was in Lahore arranging to get film reels to show in his cinema in Baramulla. With the road closed because of the fighting, he arranged a lift with the raiders, and travelled with a group of armed tribesmen during the final stretch of his journey home—an act sufficient to earn him a spell in jail as a collaborator once Indian troops took control of the town.

'From Uri to this place [Baramulla], I came in their truck,' he told me. 'They provided me with a guard. And after two days, they looted me also.' A lifetime later, he was still angry about the way the lashkar had turned on their local allies. 'When they dropped me at Baramulla, they provided a guard for me, one of the tribal men,' he repeated, hammering home the point. 'I took him to my home. After two days, they looted me

also.' There was not much killing, he asserted, but a lot of destruction. 'They were not even disciplined. From Baramulla, when they saw big buildings, rich people, they were in a habit of looting. When they reached here, they thought to start a Muslim–Hindu fight. It was only for loot.' They assumed that anyone of any wealth was a Hindu or Sikh. The raiders were led by a retired major—'Major Khurshid' according to Inayatullah, in reference to Khurshid Anwar—but when they reached Baramulla they turned violent and started to scatter in search of booty. 'They didn't listen to his orders.'

Inayatullah was one of the most prominent and wealthy of Baramulla's business community. Francis Rath, a doctor in Baramulla, remembered not only the tribesmen's occupation of the town, but also those who had chosen or been obliged to collaborate with them. His recollection was that Inayatullah's home became a field canteen for the tribal forces, that his cooks were kept busy providing meals, and that leading figures in the invasion—among them, the Pir of Manki Sharif—were found lodgings in the house. By the time I heard this story, Inayatullah was no longer alive to confirm or deny it. According to Dr Rath, Inayatullah's cinema hall was requisitioned by a district official as a refuge for Hindu women. It didn't guarantee their safety from the raiders. 'They used to come and pick them out, the women. They had a very bad time.' And he too recalled that Inayatullah's hospitality did not ensure immunity from the invaders. 'He was feeding them. Afterwards, they took away all his stuff also,' Francis Rath told me with a chuckle. 'They took all his carpets, all his expensive items and jewellery and everything.'

A similar account came from another Baramulla resident, G.M. Sherwani, at that time sympathetic to Pakistan. He had heard Jinnah speak in the town in 1944 and attended a procession in his honour. 'They were Pathans,' he told me, describing the advent of the tribal army. 'There was tremendous firing in the air. Tremendous. We trembled. All. Very much frightened. There was no resistance in Baramulla.' Again, he emphasised that there was not a great deal of killing. And the burning down of buildings—he suggested—was more by accident than by design. But Sherwani had every reason to remember the looting. 'They came to my house,' he recalled. 'My elder brother was dealing in shoes and caps. There was a boot shop. All that property was brought to our home. When those [armed tribesmen] came, we served them with tea. Afterwards [they] went to [the] hall and took shoes and some Jinnah caps as to their choice. The rest one man bundled them in a blanket and went away. We couldn't do anything. In case we stop them, maybe they will shoot us.'

Testimony as telling, and from a source no more sympathetic to India, comes from the writing of Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, who was brought up in Baramulla and went on to be chief justice of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. He chronicled the abrupt change of mood as the men initially greeted as harbingers of freedom started to torment their hosts:

> Unfortunately the enthusiasm with which the local Muslims had welcomed their entry into Baramula was short lived. A sizable number of tribesmen lost no time in turning against them and within hours, many a building were [sic] ablaze; entry was being forced in almost all pucca [robustly built] houses and its inmates were robbed on pain of death. It was a stunning blow to those who had welcomed them with open arms as liberators. Scores of houses on the left side of river Jhelum were burnt to ashes . . . . There was generally no distinction between Hindus and Muslims in so far as loot and arson was concerned . . . . The local Cinema hall was converted into a sort of a restricted brothel.[2]

Saraf wrote that Muslim women were among those targeted by the tribesmen, and poor Muslim townsmen were among those robbed. Echoing other accounts, he said that the attackers refused to believe that any substantial house could belong to a Muslim. 'Naturally, these excesses caused wide-spread indignation . . . . The Muslim youth who had so proudly attached themselves to various groups as guides began to desert them, partly out of hatred for the type of freedom they had ushered in but largely for fear of their own lives. Major Khurshid Anwar and some tribal elders were deeply ashamed of what was happening.'[3] The number of dead in the Baramulla violence, Saraf stated, was not great. He recorded somewhat chillingly that apart from two Muslims, 'half a dozen' Hindus, and the six killed at the mission, 'the killings remained confined to Sikhs'.

Sikhs were sought out by the invaders. They were prosperous, both as traders in the towns, and farmers who owned much of the best land. They were also targets for vengeance. The tribesmen would have been keenly aware of the many accounts of Sikh atrocities against Punjabi Muslims at the height of the Partition violence earlier in the year—indeed some apparently insisted that after conquering Kashmir they intended to march on to the Sikh princely state of Patiala and invade that too. The testimony of the nuns who survived the attack on the Baramulla mission emphasised the extent to which the Sikhs were targeted. 'Each night we

were in great danger as more batches [of tribesmen] were coming in looking for Sikhs,' one recalled in an official statement. They 'mistook one of the nurses as a Sikh and wanted to take her away but in the end they went off without her'. Another recalled a conversation with a boy accompanying the lashkar who was conspicuous in not carrying a gun or rifle. 'My work isn't to shoot people,' he replied, 'but to set fire to Sikh homes.' And that indeed is what he did very regularly.[4]

Kashmir's Sikh community has been described as a remnant of the period of Sikh rule over Kashmir in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Sikhs who have settled in the Valley—a community measured in the tens of thousands—by and large speak Kashmiri, and are well integrated. In the separatist insurgency that developed from the end of the 1980s, Kashmiri Sikhs were not targeted in the same way as the pandits, the Kashmiri-speaking high-caste Hindus. After all, the militant Sikh battle for a separate homeland in Punjab, eventually crushed by Indian security forces, was still a recent memory. Sikhs were not seen as agents of the Indian state. Although there have been over the years several attacks, and at least one notorious massacre, with Kashmiri Sikhs as the victims, there has been no Sikh exodus from the Valley on the scale of that of the pandits.

In 1947, both Muzaffarabad and Baramulla had substantial Sikh populations. The community in Muzaffarabad, now the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, was obliterated. Most fled in the face of the tribal assault. Quite a few were killed. Some were converted to Islam. The Sikhs had a strong martial tradition, and as the raiders advanced, there were times when Sikhs stood and fought. There were stories of arsenals stockpiled at local gurdwaras, Sikh temples. A British diplomat reported: 'Many Sikhs in this area have been armed by the Kashmir Government to reinforce their Hindu troops and police.'[5] But in the first week of the fighting, those Sikhs who chose to resist the invaders were completely overwhelmed by the scale of the incursion.

There is now no Sikh congregation in Muzaffarabad. The community in Baramulla, though it suffered grievously in 1947, survives. Today as you approach Baramulla from the west, along the Valley road—exactly the route the raiders took—the first glimpse of the town is of the cupola of an imposing Sikh temple on the other side of the Jhelum. It has been renovated since the time of the attack, but the earlier gurdwara was sufficiently grand, apparently, to lead some of the invaders to believe that they had reached the Sikh holy city of Amritsar.

The Bali family has claims to be one of the most prominent Sikh households in Baramulla. They once owned a great deal of property, and I was told that their forbears donated the land on which the Catholic college and mission were built. In recent years, the older members of the family have lived modestly in the ground floor of a house overlooking Baramulla. All had keen memories of the advent of the lashkar—the 'kabailis' as they called them. 'Everybody was running—we had only one word, run for life,' recalled Randir Singh Bali, then aged eleven. 'There was a big panic in the town—the kabailis have come, and they are not sparing anyone. In Muzaffarabad, we had relations. In Uri, we had relations. They were mostly transporters. They were coming running and going to Srinagar. On the way they informed us—you also run away, the kabailis are coming. We just bolted the outer door of our house, and we went into the jungle nearby. We stayed there the night with gujjars [herdsmen], and we thought we'll be coming [back] tomorrow morning. But we never came back. From there we ran to another village. We ran for [our] life. On foot we went village after village.'

Randhir Singh Bali's sister-in-law Gunwant Kaur was married the year before the attack while still a teenager. She told me in Urdu, with a mounting sense of anguish, how her family had suffered. Her father was killed during the attack. So were three or four other members of her family. And then there were the abductions. 'In the middle of all this, they were taking away lots of youngsters, young women. Taking them to other villages. Abducting them. Many of them were my friends.' This wasn't hearsay, she insisted. She had witnessed the tribesmen taking away her relatives. 'In front of me, my uncles' daughters—they took them. There were three cousins, and they took all three . . . . One's name was Nasib Kaur. Another was Harbans Kaur. And the third one's name was Tejinder Kaur. There were three girls. They were my cousins. And all three of them, we don't know anything about them.' I asked Gunwant Kaur how old her cousins were at the time. About sixteen or seventeen, she replied. That would have been exactly her age. The family knows nothing about their fate. Tens of thousands of women were abducted during the Partition-era violence. Some were killed, others were passed around from man to man. Many were forcibly married to their abductors. While some were recovered or retrieved, treated a bit like stolen property which had to be restored to its rightful owner, many thousands will have lived out their lives in a new household, bearing allegiance to a new religion, learning a new language, customs and cuisine. Gunwant Kaur and her family

must sometimes wonder whether in the tribal areas of Pakistan, or perhaps more proximate districts, they have blood relatives of whom they know nothing.

There's more to be said about the abduction of women—thanks to the relentless bureaucratic zeal of the Indian authorities. Seven years after Partition, all the information available about those women and children abducted at that time and still missing was published. This enormous volume restricted itself to non-Muslims, and to events in what became Pakistan or on the Pakistan side of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir. It ran to 1,400 pages, and contains more than 21,000 entries, all bearing an official reference number, the names of those taken, and details of where and by whom they were abducted.[6] Events in and around Baramulla, which was never on the Pakistan side of any formal ceasefire line, were outside the scope of this outsize volume. Still, in its last handful of pages, it listed twenty-five abductions in Baramulla district, all but two—to judge by the names—of Sikhs. Among them were Harbans Kaur, abducted in Baramulla, and Nasib Kaur, abducted nearby in Sopore—quite possibly Gunwant Kaur's cousins. In neither case was the abductor named, though in both, for reasons not specified, the entries stated that the woman was believed to be still in the area.

A surprising and unsettling aspect of this enterprise was that in most cases, the identity of either the abductor or the 'custodian' was known and recorded. There were only a few cases with the description 'abducted by a mob'. Indeed, the whole massive volume was organised not according to the area where the abduction of the woman occurred but 'grouped according to the districts in which they are reported to be living at present'. There were no entries for Frontier tribal areas such as Waziristan, from where many of the raiders came. There were hundreds of entries for Frontier districts, and 1,655 for the district of Muzaffarabad, a part of the princely state through which the lashkar advanced. Those abducted at the time of the invasion were preponderantly Sikh women and children. Just to take some examples: two thirteen-year-old Sikh girls were reported abducted in Sopore in Kashmir by—or were later apparently being held by—Gulam Mohammed Shafi, head constable of the police station at Abbottabad in Pakistan; Inder Kaur, a twenty-two-year-old Sikh woman from near Baramulla, was said to have been abducted, or being kept by, Mohammed Aslam Khan of Garhi Habibullah in the Hazara district of Pakistan. It is impossible to know how accurate the information is, but impossible also to be other than impressed and daunted by the care taken in its collation. And there are snippets which both fascinate and repel:

Joginder Kaur, known as Gijju, a seven-year-old Sikh girl from Muzaffarabad recorded as being held by the nawab of the Frontier tribal district of Swat, where her name had been changed to Bano; Kaki, a fifteen-year-old Hindu girl who lived near Peshawar, said to be with the Muslim League cleric, the Pir of Manki Sharif.

Among the Baramulla entries at the very end of the volume is a listing that startled me when I came across it, and which poses something of a mystery. It is the record of the abduction of a Hindu woman from the Baramulla convent hospital. Case number '19. BRL/S-3/U-1 W' was that of Motia Devi, the thirty-five year old wife of Sewa Ram, staying at the mission hospital, who had been abducted in Baramulla in August 1947. She was, said the list, 'likely to be found in or about Baramula'. Yet among the five gravestones in the mission grounds of those killed when the raiders struck on 27 October is that of 'Mrs Motia Devi Kapoor/w[ife]/o[f] Seva Ram Kapoor/Almora'. As we've seen, eyewitness accounts indicate that she was a patient killed in her bed, probably stabbed, by a tribesman. So, what to make of this entry? Name and location match—date and detail are at odds. Was the list simply wrong? Was she kept on the list by the family in the hope of some form of compensation, or because they would not accept that she was dead? Had she been abducted in August but later been recovered and admitted to the hospital, then abandoned by her family to suffer a still graver misfortune a few weeks later? Survivors insist that a Hindu woman patient in the mission hospital was indeed murdered by the invaders and buried in the orchard, and none of the private correspondence from that time contradicts this. There is no way of resolving the discrepancy.

Looking through other entries, for Muzaffarabad in particular, there is another striking revelation. Hundreds of Sikh women were abducted, but if this volume is a useful guide, their kidnappers were often not Pathan invaders but local men. Almost the entire Sikh population of this area fled in the face of the lashkar. It seems that Sikhs already fleeing, or preparing to move, were those most vulnerable. And in many cases, they were taken by men they may well have known and, it must be imagined, lived as their wives amid communities that were familiar to them. It has suited both local communities, Muslims and Sikhs, to blame outsiders for the extent of the abduction of women amid the turmoil of that time. That way, perhaps, it's easier to heal the wounds. But often the perpetrators appear to have been much closer to hand.

From both sides of Kashmir, there is evidence that some non-Muslim women were abducted, converted, and forced to make new lives within

local Muslim households. Almost forty years after partition, a Sikh headmistress from Srinagar returned to her home town of Muzaffarabad in Pakistan Kashmir and spent six months there. She has stated that she became aware of perhaps twenty-five or thirty local women, Hindus and Sikhs by upbringing, who had been abducted in 1947, had converted and were married to local Muslims. Most had come to terms with their fate, and were settled. She also met some non-Muslim men who as youngsters had stayed back, perhaps against their will, and who also had converted. This small remnant of a community even had a name; they were known as 'sheikhs'.[7] There is also the powerful testimony of Krishna Mehta, whose husband, the district commissioner of Muzaffarabad, was killed by members of the lashkar. She set down her own remarkable story of survival, in which she wrote of the abduction of non-Muslim women, the apparent suicide of some of those taken captive, and of the experience of spending time with women who had been retrieved and were waiting to be sent into Indian territory but who remained at risk from marauding raiders.[8]

On the Indian side of the line, two British women who served in Kashmir as Christian missionaries became aware that Sikh women who were left 'defenceless' when their menfolk were killed 'were taken into the homes of Muslim men, and became their wives . . . . Lily and I had close knowledge of this terrible predicament,' wrote Margaret Brown, who served at a mission in Sopore, 'for often these women would come weeping to our house. One young Sikh woman was very badly treated by the Muslim who had taken her in, and she came to us in the middle of the night. She knocked on Lily's window at the side of the house, looking for shelter. Lily invited her in. She went back to her Muslim home when the man's wrath was temporarily abated.'[9] While Sikh women in particular were the most vulnerable to abduction in the Kashmir Valley, there were victims and perpetrators among all communities. Kamla Patel, who played a key role in the Indian government's efforts to recover abducted women, took on particular responsibility for Kashmiri Muslim women who had been abducted (where, and in what circumstances, she did not specify) by Sikh men.[10]

Whatever the level of abductions, killing and destruction at Baramulla, within a few days of the raiders' arrival in the town, most of the population had fled. It became a ghost town. Almost everything of value was looted, and the attackers clearly spent more time seeking cloth, crockery and valuables to take home with them than planning the next stage of their offensive. This is what lies behind the biggest 'what if' of

the fighting in Kashmir in 1947. What if the tribesmen had pressed ahead quickly from Baramulla towards Srinagar and captured the airstrip, stopping the airlift of Indian troops? Surely Kashmir would then have fallen to Pakistan, and the history of South Asia would have been very different. That was certainly the view of the *New York Times* correspondent on the spot, Robert Trumbull. 'Looting, raping, killing, and burning, these fearsome warriors swept through Kashmir like a plague, until they reached the large town of Baramula,' Trumbull wrote in his memoirs. 'There they stopped a full night in a foolish quarrel over booty. The night's pause in Baramula changed history.'[11]

The most powerful recitation of this argument appeared in the reminiscences of a senior Pakistani army officer, Major General Akbar Khan, one of the instigators of the incursion. He became a fierce critic of Pakistan's failure to intervene more decisively in Kashmir, which in turn was a factor in his conviction and jailing four years later in the country's first big treason trial. He did not immediately head out with the lashkar, but followed on a week after it started carrying a huge amount of ammunition and reached Baramulla on 29 or 30 October:

> This used to be a town of orchards, schools, road and river transport stations, shops and restaurants—in short a bright and cheerful looking place. But now it looked as if an earthquake had shaken it. Shops were empty, doors and windows were gone—brick, stone and paper littered the ground . . .
>
> The tribesmen had reached here on the 26th . . . . The State troops, thoroughly demoralised, had retreated in disorder. Only 35 more miles remained of level road and virtually no resistance. The tribesmen had a barely two hour journey left—and before them lay Srinagar, trembling, seemingly at their mercy. But the tribesmen had not moved forward that day, nor the next day. When at last they had advanced on the 28th, they had encountered the Indian troops that a hundred aircraft had been bringing in since the previous day. Although these had been successfully overcome ten miles outside Baramulla, a whole day had been lost in doing so. Thus it was not till the evening of the 29th, that the tribesmen had moved forward to Srinagar itself . . .
>
> But why had two crucial days been wasted at Baramulla? It is more than probable that if these two days had not been lost, the story of Kashmir would be an entirely different one. There was no authentic answer to be found. It is unlikely that the tribesmen

> themselves had wanted the delay; sending back their wounded could not have taken that much time; waiting for more men could hardly have been the cause as they knew that speed would be more valuable; and Baramulla itself could not have held that much attraction for them when the biggest prize of all, Srinagar, was so near at hand.[12]

News correspondents, reporting while the fighting was still raging, seized on this issue, and provided their own answer. The view of *The Times*—whose correspondent Eric Britter was one of the most knowledgeable foreign correspondents in the region—set the tone for much of the press comment. He reported that the invading tribesmen, numbering about 10,000, 'are well armed and well trained', but that the 'impetus of their attack was dissipated because their leaders were not strong enough to prevent them from dispersing in search of loot'.[13] The *Times of India* correspondent in Srinagar stated bluntly that had 'the invading tribesmen been less interested in looting and plundering and more concerned with military results, they should have been in Srinagar on October 22'.[14] Several accounts of the conflict by Indian army veterans—perhaps anxious to emphasise how close India came to losing Kashmir and how great the country's debt is to its soldiers—also asserted that a resolute tribal force could easily have taken the Valley.

Akbar Khan's own mischievous suggestion for the reason for delay was to blame the man who was the nearest the lashkar had to a commanding officer. It 'may have been what the locals at Baramula said,' Khan innocently remarked, 'that Khurshid Anwar, who was in command, had waited for Kashmiri Leaders whom he had sent for in order to confer with regarding his own position in the future Government of Kashmir.' That's not a compelling explanation. But certainly at Baramulla, the lashkar lost its momentum. The opportunities for loot must have been part of the explanation. Also, the terrain had changed. The opening out of the Valley beyond Baramulla required the raiders to advance through what is, in essence, a plain, away from their natural mountain habitat, and increasingly susceptible to being cut off from their retreat route. And with the deployment of Indian troops, the tribesmen were facing a more formidable adversary. More than this, the commanders of the lashkar appear to have believed that without greater discipline their goals could not be achieved. The looting at Baramulla had distracted the lashkar from its military purpose, had disaffected local Kashmiris who might otherwise have provided considerable support, and had sullied

the reputation of the tribal forces and the causes of Islam and of Pakistan that they espoused.

If the looting led to delay in the lashkar's advance, then so too did the attempts to address the problems of lax organisation, loose command structures and widespread robbery and rape. A British diplomat based in Pakistan picked up a telling if partisan account of this when he visited Abbottabad, still the nerve centre of the tribesmen's continuing military operations, at the beginning of December 1947. He spoke to some Mahsud maliks, or local leaders, who echoed Akbar Khan in blaming Major Khurshid Anwar for the lashkar's failure to take Srinagar, but for a different reason. 'It was he, [the Mahsud maliks] said, who had caused the delay in their first advance when the whole of the Kashmir Valley lay open before them with nothing but the remnants of the Kashmir State forces to defend it.'

> After the capture of Domel and Baramulla, Khurshid Anwar apparently asked all the tribal leaders to sign an undertaking on behalf of their men to abstain from looting, to respect Government property, protect treasuries and so on. The maliks objected that it was the most inopportune moment to raise such a question and that the tribesmen would never agree to any such thing, having come in the belief that they would be able to keep anything they could take. Khurshid Anwar, however, pressed his point, so much so that it was suggested that he had better be killed and replaced as commander; but it was decided that this would be impolitic and would undermine confidence. The result was that two valuable days were wasted in tribal discussion and arguments, which gave time for the Indian Troops to land in force in Kashmir.[15]

Piecing together fragments of evidence, it seems that when Khurshid Anwar found resistance from tribal leaders to his attempts to instil discipline, he or his colleagues paused at Baramulla to summon political and religious figures respected by the tribesmen, with the hope that they would read the riot act to their errant fighters and persuade them to behave. The *Daily Express*'s Sydney Smith certainly suggested as much when debriefed by British diplomats in Delhi. Smith spent some days in Baramulla as a detainee of the raiders, held initially in the home of a retired superintendent of the Kashmir police. 'There was a Muslim League flag flying on this house,' Smith said, 'but it did the owner no good as he

was thoroughly looted of all his possession by the tribesmen.' Smith also met Hyat Khan—the man who had halted the killing at the Catholic mission—who was 'dressed in Air Force trousers and blue pullover. He was an Afridi who had been born in Kashmir. He had been in the Indian Air Force and was under orders of transfer to the Pakistan Army, but said that he had never joined and described himself as a deserter.' Through him he met Major Khurshid Anwar, who was 'not particularly friendly' and an array of more amenable senior tribal leaders, among them Aslam Khan, an Afridi former army officer, and Shah Pasand Khan, a Mahsud who had been a colonel in the Afghan royal army.

Sydney Smith also became aware of the presence in Baramulla of one of Pakistan's political heavyweights, a Muslim cleric who had done much to instigate the invasion of Kashmir and to persuade his tribal followers that this was a jihad:

> A day or two later the Pir of Manki Sharif of the N.W.F.P. appeared and apparently castigated all and sundry for their disgraceful behaviour and the order went round that the Mahsuds were to go. There appeared to be a sudden panic and the tribesmen all went off in trucks down the road. Mr. Smith and Umrao Khan [the retired police superintendent] came out of the latter's house for the first time as it had been unsafe even to go into the garden, and found the place deserted. Later, however, they all started coming back. It appeared that their officers had gone and brought them as the other tribesmen had refused to fight unless the Mahsuds stayed with them.[16]

The presence of the pir, a cleric of great influence within the Muslim League in the Frontier province, is particularly intriguing. The lashkar veteran Khan Shah Afridi, who took part in the invasion at the pir's request, met him in Baramulla, and heard his plea to the fighters to show greater resolve, a message that was not well received. 'We saw the Pir of Manki Sharif there. He was present in Baramulla. He was alone and asked us to fight. He told us that those who wished to go back would not be provided fuel for their vehicles. The tribesmen told the pir they would have their own fuel as they wanted to turn up in their villages alive.'

M.Y. Saraf, too, has left an account of how the pir came to Baramulla at the behest of the Frontier chief minister and 'forcefully reminded [the tribesmen] that plunder was not the primary purpose for which they had entered Kashmir. He also told them what were the commands of God and our Holy Prophet . . . about the rules of conduct in a war.'[17] The

comments of captured tribesmen, reported by Indian newspapers and later compiled and circulated by the Indian government, also pointed to a serious row within the lashkar's ranks. The *Times of India* correspondent in Baramulla heard a prisoner state: 'One section had argued that in a *Jehad* looting was not permitted and that therefore they should refrain from such activities, and confine themselves to killing the *Kaffirs* [non-believers] or converting them to Islam. The other section, mostly Tribals, had refused to listen to them and insisted on looting.'[18]

The nuns at the Baramulla convent also remembered the pir—ten years after the event, an Italian nun told one of India's most distinguished journalists, Frank Moraes, of '"a stout, round roly-poly of a man" . . . before whom the raiders prostrated themselves'.

> The two infant children of Colonel and Mrs Dykes were brought before him, and the Pir solemnly presented thirty rupees to both of them.
>
> 'Aren't you ashamed', said one of the nuns, 'to give thirty rupees to the children whose parents your men have killed?'
>
> 'The Pir said nothing but with his arrival the condition of the nuns and the Convent improved . . . '[19]

The Pir of Manki Sharif's visit had other beneficial effects. While the lashkar's looting certainly didn't stop, there was no further incident of the notoriety of the sacking of Baramulla and the desecration of its mission. But the various tribal contingents were not fused into a more cohesive fighting force. While elements of the tribal forces moved on towards the Kashmiri capital, they did so haphazardly, and with little greater discipline than before.

There were a few experienced army officers accompanying the lashkar, whether under instructions from the Pakistan army or civil authorities or on their own initiative. The number appears to have been modest. Sydney Smith made no mention of coming across more than a handful of officers in a position of command. From Pakistan's point of view, this was arguably the worst of both worlds. There was clearly a level of complicity in the incursion, but not sufficient to provide the prospect of success or to prevent wild indiscipline. After Kashmir's accession to India, Pakistan's new rulers came to see that there was more at stake in the fighting for the Valley. The raiders were no longer simply a proxy force who might be able to achieve leverage for Pakistan. In the absence of a formal mobilisation of the Pakistan army, they were the only military

option open to Jinnah and his ministers to keep Kashmir's fate in play. The longer the fighting continued, and with it the uncertainty about who would claim Kashmir, the greater the new Pakistan government's urgency to provide support.

The most graphic and telling account of the debate within Pakistan's leadership about supporting the tribesmen's offensive comes from the diary of Sir George Cunningham. He had been recalled by Jinnah to his old job as governor of the North West Frontier Province. On 29 October, the day after Jinnah's showdown with Field Marshal Auchinleck which ended with the rescinding of the Pakistan government's order to send its troops into Kashmir, Cunningham met Jinnah in Lahore to discuss how to assist the invasion more surreptitiously:

> I said that, as things stood now . . . I thought a military advance up the Jhelum Valley would be very difficult, as there was little room at Baramula to deploy. I also begged him not to get our army mixed up with operations by tribesmen. The two things wouldn't go together. I said the only thing to do now, if pressure were required, was to pump in more tribesmen, but that proper organisation of rations, ammunition, and supplies was essential, as well as some recognised authority for summoning tribal quotas. He finally agreed with all this . . .[20]

Cunningham recorded that a discussion immediately afterwards in the presence of Pakistan's prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, agreed on a seven-point plan to support the lashkar. The authorities would seek to send tribal reinforcements to Baramulla to keep the lashkar's strength there at about 5,000, and would supply rations and ammunition from Punjab. 'I would supply 100,000 rounds from village defence stocks,' Cunningham noted. There would be separate moves to get arms and ammunition to the insurgents near Poonch, in a different sector of the fighting. The tribesmen would be given cash payments on their return home, and bodies being sent back for burial would be routed away from Punjab—'this would be too blatant!!' A five-strong directing committee was established in Abbottabad consisting of Pakistani officials and officers, who 'would control recruiting, operations and supplies, etc.', and should any more Pakistani army officers be required in the operation 'it would probably be best to give them leave'.[21]

The Pakistani authorities were determined to make an attempt to co-opt the tribal fighters and mould them into a more effective force. It

was perhaps an aspect of this new endeavour that Sydney Smith witnessed during his enforced sojourn at the Baramulla mission, and later commented on to British diplomats. He saw 'no-one looking like Punjabis until a body of about 1,000 men appeared in uniform and whose duty seemed to be to act as a sort of field security police force to try and maintain order. A permanent guard of these men was put over the convent and hospital and Mr. Smith said that they did well. Most of them seemed to be ex-soldiers.' Smith surmised that these men had been sent either by the Pir of Manki Sharif or in response to his reports of indiscipline.[22] Another news correspondent, Jim Michaels of the United Press news agency, also saw evidence of Pakistani attempts to strengthen the anti-Indian forces. He managed to travel from Rawalpindi in Pakistan to Poonch, where he met both Azad Kashmir fighters and some of their leaders. 'On the return trip,' he recalled, 'I saw an amazing sight. At least a battalion of Pakistani regulars crossed into Kashmir, ripping off their regimental insignia as they marched. My minders made no effort to prevent my seeing it.'[23]

Although Sir George Cunningham appears to have taken the lead in trying to tame the lashkar, he was beset by misgivings:

> I am not particularly happy . . . about the whole business, and I suspect JINNAH is conscious of having made a blunder (having assumed that tribal intervention would not at once—as seemed obvious to me—throw KASHMIR into the arms of India) and is desperate to find a way out. Anyway, the harm has been done, and we have to make the best of the situation. It is full of snags, not the least how we are to prevent our tribal contingents looting our own districts on their homeward march. I never thought I would become practically a member of a tribal *lashkar*; the fact that it is aimed against the Sikhs and people like [Sardar] PATEL is some consolation.[24]

It seems that Cunningham had become a member of the lashkar in more ways than one, sharing their mindset as well as aiding their invasion. That last visceral remark of his is a haunting reflection of how bitter relations had become between countries and communities in the wake of the Partition bloodletting.

Jinnah, although always the cautious lawyer in his use of language, at times came close to suggesting that he controlled the tribal army. Lord Mountbatten, India's Governor General, met Jinnah in Lahore on 1 November, five days after the first Indian troops reached Srinagar,

to seek to ease the tension and secure a disengagement between the Indian army and Pakistani tribesmen. According to Mountbatten's account of their discussions, Pakistan's leader appeared to give the lie to his government's repeated assertion that the tribal forces were beyond their control:

> Mr Jinnah said that both sides should withdraw at once. He emphasized that the withdrawal must be simultaneous. When I asked him how the tribesmen were to be called off, he said that all he had to do was to give them an order to come out and to warn them that if they did not comply, he would send large forces along their lines of communication. In fact, if I was prepared to fly to Srinagar with him, he would guarantee that the business would be settled within 24 hours.
>
> I expressed mild astonishment at the degree of control that he appeared to exercise over the raiders.[25]

Whatever the degree of control, the level of support was not anything like as great as the architects of the tribal invasion had hoped. A month after the expulsion of the raiders from the Kashmir Valley, Khurshid Anwar, nursing his wounds in a hospital in Karachi and no doubt looking for scapegoats, complained to the Muslim League newspaper *Dawn* that he had been hampered by the government's inactivity. He was 'very bitter against the Pakistan Government for not having rendered any assistance to the tribesmen in their heroic bid to capture Srinagar. He was of the opinion that given the necessary arms and ammunition, the tribesmen would sweep the whole state within a few days.'[26] In fact, the Pakistani authorities were providing arms, and petrol and transport. They could not have done much more other than to have ordered a mobilisation of the regular army to back up the tribesmen—which is what Jinnah had initially wanted to, and what the Pakistan government eventually did the following spring. Khurshid Anwar also had another scapegoat in view, telling a British veteran of the Frontier whom he met in Karachi about the grave shortcomings of the tribal forces. 'He was very bitter against the Mahsuds who, he said, were responsible for both the worst atrocities and the disastrous delays of the initial offensive.'[27]

The Pakistan establishment came to be more concerned about getting the tribesmen back to the Frontier without incident than in using them to gain a toehold in the Kashmir Valley. Sir George Cunningham confided in his diary in mid-November that 'ABDUL QAYUM [his chief

minister in the Frontier Province] came . . . and told me that the people running the Kashmir Operations were fed up with our tribesmen. I could have told them 3 weeks ago that this would happen if they had asked me.' Later the same month, the chief minister publicly suggested that the Frontier tribesmen should be absorbed into the Pakistan army and given thorough training, because they lacked discipline.[28] He had every reason to know just how undisciplined they were.

Nevertheless, Baramulla was not the end of their advance. Even with the Indian army airlifting hundreds of soldiers each day from 27 October onwards, the tribal forces managed to get within a few miles of the centre of Srinagar, and almost to the perimeter of the airstrip. It was another ten days before the military tide turned decisively in India's favour.

Heading for Srinagar

As you approach Baramulla from Srinagar along the Jhelum Valley road, a little before you enter the outskirts of the town, there's an imposing modern war memorial—and as an unintended reminder that the war is not over, the memorial has an Indian military guard. Troops of the Rashtriya Rifles were on duty when I passed by, pleased to have a break from the monotony of looking after a monument that hardly anyone visits. The two Kashmiris I was travelling with didn't stir from the car—locals showing an interest in a public tribute to the Indian army might provoke too much interest in themselves. Beyond a brick-built arch, a black marble plaque listed India's war dead in its initial battles for Kashmir. With the amused encouragement of the army guards, I took some pictures, then made my way along a well-kept, flower-edged path up a steep incline. It led to an elegant cenotaph-style column set in the hillside. On the base was the inscription: 'In memory of the brave soldiers of the 1st Battalion The Sikh Regiment who gave their lives so that Kashmiris may live in freedom. They were the first Indian troops to land at Srinagar on 27 Oct 47. On this fateful hill, was fought their first engagement.' This was the spot where Indian troops fired their first shots to repulse the forces from Pakistan. The initial skirmish did not augur well for the Indian army's operations in Kashmir.

The task of leading the First Sikh battalion on its landing in Kashmir fell to Lieutenant Colonel Dewan Ranjit Rai, who had been the commanding officer for only a matter of days. Within an hour of his plane touching down at Srinagar, he had received a briefing at the airstrip from the Kashmir state forces—who told him, incorrectly, that the raiders had not then entered Baramulla (a misapprehension quickly corrected by aerial reconnaissance)—and had assembled about 140 of his men who had flown in on the first flight of nine aircraft. He believed that this was an insufficient force to secure the airstrip, and even if it forestalled an attack there, it left the nearby city of Srinagar unprotected. So he headed

towards Baramulla, in the hope of delaying the raiders' advance by staging a fighting withdrawal.[1] And that's broadly how it worked. The Indian troops advanced to within a mile and a half of Baramulla, linking up with the remnants of a cavalry unit of the maharaja's forces, and from their slightly raised vantage point the Sikh soldiers could not only see the flames of buildings on fire in the town but could hear shouts and screams.

The Sikh troops seem to have been unaware that one of their officers, the recently appointed acting commandant of their regimental centre, Lt Colonel Tom Dykes, was trapped in Baramulla. The initial detachment took up position outside the town at almost exactly the moment the mission hospital was being overrun. Some of the echoes of the attack that reached the Indian troops would have been from the convent and hospital, which were on the side of town closest to their initial location. The Indian forces were clearly outnumbered, and did not seek to intervene.

The Sikh troops' first night at Baramulla was quiet. The first shots came the next morning, on 28 October. At about nine in the morning, there was an exchange of fire with raiders on the far side of the Jhelum river who appeared to be advancing towards the next sizeable town, Sopore. Shortly afterwards, armed men approached the Indian positions from along the Jhelum Valley road. More shots were fired and—according to the most detailed Indian account of the operations—by around midday, the lashkar had brought in machine guns and mortars to try to dislodge the troops blocking their advance. They eventually succeeded. In late afternoon, Colonel Rai decided to withdraw his outnumbered and outgunned troops.

There is an independent eyewitness account of the Indian army's initial exchanges in the contest for Kashmir—the first shots in a conflict that has rumbled on ever since. John Thompson was a British man who had served as an army major during the war and was working as the general manager of a timber firm in Baramulla. Thompson wanted to marry a Baramulla woman Leela Pasricha (they eventually spent more than forty years together), and her parents and siblings were among those taking refuge in the mission. He had travelled into Srinagar, apparently cycling the thirty-five miles, on 26 October—the day before both the attack on the hospital and the arrival of the first Indian troops. His aim was to try to secure the evacuation of the mission, or at least the most vulnerable among its residents. He also carried a letter from Colonel Dykes asking for a truck to be sent to take out his family and servant.

In Srinagar, Thompson, accompanied by Sydney Smith of the *Daily Express*—who was no doubt scenting a route to the scene of the action—

enlisted the assistance of Major W.P. Cranston. He had been sent to Srinagar by the British High Commission in New Delhi both to provide an on-the-spot assessment of the political situation and to help with the evacuation of British nationals. The major's presence in the Kashmir capital has attracted a lot of comment, at the time and subsequently. Some Indian historians have assumed, though without any firm evidence, that he was working for British intelligence. His preoccupation was trying to get the elderly and settled-in-their-ways British community in Srinagar, up to 400 in number, to move out by air or road. But his reports back to Delhi covered more than simply the welfare of British nationals, and are a valuable source of information about the nature, progress and retreat of the tribal forces. It may well have been word of Cranston's presence in Srinagar that prompted misgivings in Pakistan about Britain's attitude to the conflict. A despatch from the senior British diplomat in Lahore mentioned reports circulating that 'there is a British Brigadier [in Kashmir], which is taken very much amiss by people of all sorts here'.[2]

The three British men—Major Cranston, John Thompson and Sydney Smith—called on the Kashmir army headquarters on the Tuesday morning, 28 October. 'Mr Thompson wished to take a lorry to Baramulla in order to evacuate Colonel and Mrs Dykes and their family. The Military authorities would not, however, permit this on account of military operations then taking place to recapture Baramulla. I then offered,' Major Cranston wrote in a diplomatic memo, 'to go along in a lorry, wearing uniform and flying the Union Jack in order to get through the tribesmen and bring out Colonel and Mrs Dykes. Again however, the Military authorities would not permit me to do so.'[3]

John Thompson and Sydney Smith managed to persuade the newly arrived Indian army to take them to the front as observers. Both had military experience, and Thompson knew the lie of the land, so they were potentially valuable allies. They travelled by jeep towards the front line, with Colonel Rai alongside, to find a company of Sikh troops holding the ridge outside Baramulla, which Thompson estimated was about two miles on the Srinagar side of the town. 'A fight ensued but the SIKHS were finally driven off the ridge by Mortar fire suffering casualties which I could not assess, but they must have been considerable as the Tribesmen also attacked from the rear . . . . In the ensuing muddle I [and Sydney Smith] . . . were left behind and took cover in the nullah [ditch], as bullets were coming at us from both sides and 3" Mortar Bombs were bursting unpleasantly near . . . . We were eventually discovered by the Tribesmen

who fired a few shots at us but luckily missed. When they got near and saw that we were Europeans they stopped firing and came up to us. They roughly handled us knocking us down and robbing us of all our possessions, taking R[upee]s. 1500/- off me which I had just got from SRINAGAR for payments for timber. . . . The Tribesmen started squabbling over the division of the money they had got from me and Mr. SYDNEY SMITH.'[4] John Thompson and Sydney Smith became separated. While Thompson managed to make his way to the convent, Smith was captured by the tribesmen.

Towards the close of the afternoon, Colonel Rai, the officer commanding the Sikh troops, became one of the first Indian casualties in Kashmir. He was shot through the head while retreating with his men, and apparently died instantly. His fellow soldiers were not able to carry the body with them, so it was hidden in the fields. Dewan Ranjit Rai was posthumously awarded one of India's most distinguished awards for gallantry, the Maha Vir Chakra. The initial Indian military action had succeeded in delaying the raiders' advance, perhaps by a full day. It had bought time for more troops to be flown in to the Srinagar airstrip. But it had not pinned the lashkar at Baramulla, and the loss of the Sikhs' commanding officer on the second day of the airlift was a heavy blow to the Indian forces. Whatever view Indian officers might have held of the tribesmen before fighting was joined, it was now clear that the Indian army was facing an experienced and well-equipped adversary.

The next defensive point that the Indian troops sought to secure was the elevated ground near the town of Pattan, which is roughly equidistant from Srinagar and Baramulla and on the main road between the Valley's two principal towns. Through two days of intermittent clashes, the Sikh troops succeeded in holding the raiders. Indian air power was brought to bear, and greatly restricted the movement of the tribal forces. The lashkar had entered Kashmir, in the judgement of a Pakistani military historian, imagining that it would be fighting against a modest adversary, the Kashmir state forces, only to find itself up against the much more formidable Indian army, backed up by strafing and bombing attacks from the air and, eventually, armoured cars.[5] Initially, military aircraft based at the Royal Indian Air Force training station at Ambala, more than 200 miles south of the Kashmir Valley, flew sorties against the advancing tribesmen. In spite of the absence of servicing and maintenance facilities at the Srinagar airstrip, the air force managed to base a handful of Spitfires and Harvards there, while Tempests flying from Ambala and Amritsar

provided further support. Flying Officer J.J. Bouche flew in a Spitfire from Ambala on October 28 but initially could not locate his intended target. He took a spur of the moment decision to land on the grass strip at Srinagar:

> We found a lot of baggage and army equipment lying close to the strip. We taxied carefully avoiding these obstacles and parked in the area we thought was the best for us. On landing, we were approached by an army officer who briefed us on the location of targets. Since there were no ground crews, we carried out pilot turn around servicing and got airborne and found the enemy concentration in another location near Baramula which we strafed successfully. The raiders ran helter-skelter and tried to take shelter wherever they could. In a few minutes, the position had been cleared with quite a few casualties. After the attack, we landed back at Srinagar. Our ground crews and ground equipment had not still arrived and there were no refuelling facilities at Srinagar. We decanted some fuel in cans from Dakota aircraft and, thus, fuelled the aircraft. The question of rearming the aircraft did not arise, as neither the gun ammunition nor the tools were available.[6]

The Indian air force enjoyed the enormous advantage of having the skies to themselves. Group Captain Arjan Singh was commanding the Ambala flying school at the time, and flew several times to Kashmir. 'It was very easy—because there was no opposition. Pakistan air force never came in. Even with a small number of aircraft, had they come in it would have made our operations quite difficult. Because the whole of Kashmir is nearer the Pakistan border than Ambala or backward bases.' The threat of attack from the air made it difficult for the raiders' trucks to move by daylight. It tipped the military balance strongly in India's favour. But it didn't prevent the tribal forces from advancing by foot through the countryside, rather than along the Jhelum Valley road, and outflanking the Indian positions.

Official announcements talked of successes against the raiders, and Indian forces advancing down the Valley. Reports in the Indian papers spoke of the tribesmen being 'routed' as the airlift gathered momentum. Certainly, the strength of the Indian armed forces was increasing by several hundred troops every day while the insurgents were getting little material support from local residents. The lashkar's advance had not sparked off an uprising. But the military situation remained much more

precarious than the Indian communiqués and military-inspired news stories indicated. Pilots engaged in evacuating foreigners from Srinagar gave a sense of the continuing threat posed by the tribal forces. 'Royal Air Force observers say that armed Pathan Moslems, swarming into the princely state of Kashmir, are advancing in such strength as to threaten the capital of Srinagar itself,' a news agency reported on 1 November. 'One RAF informant said, after flying in last night, that truckloads of Indian reinforcements are being rushed to the front, less than twenty miles west of Srinagar. Srinagar's small dust-covered airport has taken on the aspect of an advanced base of operations.' At one point, stores hastily unloaded from arriving planes and stacked haphazardly at the side of the runway were getting in the way. And so too were the abandoned vehicles of the wealthy and well-connected seeking an air passage out of Srinagar.[7]

When Lieutenant Colonel Harbakhsh Singh of the Indian army flew into Srinagar on 1 November, the military situation was so fluid he did not know whether his plane would be able to land. As the aircraft approached the Srinagar airstrip, he saw villages ablaze. 'Smoke was coming from all directions, and I was not sure whether the airfield was in our hands or not. I was told to make sure before landing whether the airfield was in our hands or in the enemy hands. I said [to the pilot] first of all do a dummy run, don't land. So we went—one man appeared from the hut—he just waved at us, didn't fire. So I said now we can land.' Harbakhsh Singh had been in hospital in Ambala when he heard of the death of his colleague Colonel Rai, and, as the next most senior officer in the First Sikh battalion, requested an immediate flight to Kashmir. On arriving at the Srinagar airstrip, one of the first people he met was his nephew, an officer in the Patiala state forces, a Sikh-ruled princely state that had acceded to India. Singh requisitioned the Patiala troops' gun battery, fired a few rounds towards raiders in the vicinity of the airfield, and then set off in search of the troops he was to command.

A day or two earlier, an Indian journalist, Ajit Bhattacharjea, had managed to get a seat as the only passenger in a supply plane flying in to Srinagar—and found himself uncomfortably close to the military action. 'I was a young reporter on the *Hindustan Times*. A friend of mine was a pilot on one of the planes that was carrying supplies—oil and petrol—into the Valley. So he asked me if I'd like to come along, so I did. As we approached the Valley—a fantastic sight, really imprinted on my memory, because we flew very low. It was a Dakota DC3, and just cleared the Banihal [pass] with the load we were carrying. It was so beautiful, the Valley—until we approached Srinagar, when we could see wisps of smoke on the

horizon and came down to land.' He remembered a line of people ferrying supplies to the front line with the raiders. Newly landed troops were being sent directly to the front, which he was told was just five miles away.

Srinagar was a beleaguered city. Its power supply was cut, the established system of governance had fallen apart, food and other essential supplies had been interrupted, travel out of the city was almost impossible, and there was no press, no proper information network, and no means of communication. A marauding army of tribesmen was at the gates of the city, and the Indian troops who were coming to the city's defence were an outside army making its first foray into Kashmir. The issue of Kashmir's future status—which had been uncomfortably stalled for months—had been resolved, at least for the moment, by a princely ruler who had promptly fled his capital, and by force of Indian arms. Kashmiris had been given little opportunity to express their opinion. Sheikh Abdullah, the commanding Kashmir politician of the moment, had stepped into the political vacuum, and had also endorsed accession to India. For the people of Srinagar, he was a familiar and trusted face, and his presence at the helm suggested that Kashmiris had gained at least some control of their destiny.

Ajit Bhattacharjea spent only a few hours in Srinagar during his brief visit at the end of October. 'The city was open. Mind you—the police, the maharaja and his administration had fled. There was no sign of them. Yet it was functioning. Not because troops were there—there were very few of them. But the entire city was being handled by the National Conference volunteers—90% of them were Muslims. They were guarding the bridges, the shops—most of the shops were open.' Sheikh Abdullah and his supporters had filled the vacuum left by the departure of the maharaja and his court. He had been given the official title of 'emergency administrator' and M.C. Mahajan initially remained the prime minister. But there was no mistaking who was in charge.

On 31 October, Sheikh Abdullah was sworn in as '"head of the administration"' . . . invested with '"full powers to meet the present emergency"'. *The Times* correspondent in Srinagar described the city as 'gay with banners and bunting and filled with processions of marching men as Sheikh Abdullah went to the old palace on the bank of the Jhelum River to take the oath of office'. Later in the day he addressed a rally 'the like of which Srinagar has never before seen. His popularity in the city and its environs is undoubted, and although one meets occasional sympathizers with the Muslim League they are lying low and biding their time, hoping for the raiders and rebels to enter the city.'[8] Five weeks

earlier, the 'Lion of Kashmir' was the maharaja's prisoner, now he was the unrivalled political master of his native city. Few of Abdullah's colleagues were aware, however, that the man who had condemned the maharaja and many of his officials for deserting Srinagar at its hour of need had quietly arranged, on the second day of the Indian military airlift, for the evacuation of members of his family. They flew to Delhi, where they stayed initially as Nehru's guests.[9]

The volunteer force which patrolled, and in some ways controlled, Srinagar after the collapse of the maharaja's authority was a remarkable innovation. The Kashmir Valley had no tradition of politically aligned militia. The National Conference force had been some weeks in the making. Sheikh Abdullah, addressing a public meeting some ten days after his release from detention, appealed for 10,000 volunteers to form what he called a 'peace brigade'. 'Sheikh Abdullah said that reports were reaching Srinagar from the State borders which necessitated the formation of a volunteer corps to maintain peace and protect "our hearth and homes", irrespective of creed or community.'[10] Sheikh Abdullah's critics complained loudly that he was now part of the court party, and had thrown in his political lot with the maharaja. But the clique of courtiers can hardly have been happy that such a commanding political figure was recruiting a quasi-military force.

As the crisis intensified in late October, the National Conference volunteers transformed into a popular militia. Even before it became known that the maharaja had fled, militia members had been deployed in Srinagar. The collapse of much of the civil administration, and of the maharaja's security forces, gave urgency to their mission. On the day the first Indian troops landed in Kashmir, Nehru wrote in a private letter of the need for what he later called a 'home guard' loyal to Sheikh Abdullah. 'Chosen young men, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh, should be given rifles and if possible given some simple training,' he told an Indian army officer who had been sent to Srinagar as his personal emissary. 'We must do all this on a non-communal basis inviting everyone to joining in defence but taking care of one major factor—to trust none who might give trouble. . . . These armed volunteers can well undertake the defence of, and the duty of keeping order in Srinagar and other towns in the Valley.'[11]

By the following day, 28 October, 'hundreds of "National Conference" volunteers' were in the streets, which—according to *The Times*—'combined to keep the peace and helped to restore confidence'. Two days later, 'several scores of them appeared armed for the first time with standard .303 rifles which a spokesman said they had obtained

from "friendly sources"', reported *The Times* from the Kashmir capital, hinting broadly that the Indian army was supplying the militia. 'The city remains quiet and without communal clashes,' *The Times* stated, 'but the outward stream of Hindu and Sikh refugees has not ceased, and the civil transport aircraft that bring in reinforcements for the Indian Army depart full of men, women, and children and their pitiful belongings.'[12] The militia were on guard, patrolling the streets (in Srinagar at least, they appear to have been much less visible elsewhere) and had been deployed on the approaches to the city. Remarkable photographs have survived of young National Conference volunteers—members of the children's Bal Sena, rather than of the militia—mustering for drilling outside the party's newly acquired headquarters, a cinema in the heart of Srinagar. All were wearing caps with the National Conference insignia, a white plough against a red background, and were holding wooden rifles.

Other photographs show the women's brigade of the militia—a striking innovation in conservative and Muslim Kashmir—shouldering real weapons during an inspection by Jawaharlal Nehru. Several hundred women in Srinagar joined the militia, and had basic weapons training Krishna Misri (then Krishna Zardoo) was a thirteen-year-old Pandit girl in Srinagar at that time. She recalled the impact of the tales of atrocities committed by the raiders. 'My mother was horrified because she had four daughters. Two were married and two were not married. So she didn't know what to do with two of us—the ones that were unmarried. Since this organisation was known as women's self-defence crops, they said that they would be training us in firearms so that we can defend ourselves. That was a great motivation for all of us to join this militia at that time. Perhaps to defend my honour, my self-respect, I thought that I must have this training and I should be able to defend myself.' She was trained by a former soldier on how to use a rifle—'when my instructor shot the first fire, we were so scared we ran away'—and the women volunteers, among them her eleven-year-old sister, conducted regular drills and parades. The women's militia appears not to have fought—their intended role was to defend themselves and their homes should Srinagar be attacked. The volunteers' main work was in helping the refugees from the fighting—mainly, in Krishna Zardoo's memory, near-destitute Sikh women and children—who clustered into temporary camps in schools and government buildings in Srinagar.

Communists who were closely aligned with the National Conference appear to have been prominent in the ranks of the armed volunteers. Pran Nath Jalali, then an eighteen-year-old communist student leader in Srinagar, told me that he had been one of the organisers of the militia and its political

commander. He recalled that many, perhaps most, of the militia's initial leaders were Communist Party sympathisers. The volunteers' military potential was never properly put to the test. But they were armed and many saw active service, often accompanying Indian army detachments and providing information about terrain and serving as a channel of communication with Kashmiri-speaking villagers and townspeople. Several members of the militia were killed. The militia's very visible presence in Srinagar was powerful confirmation that the old princely order had gone. As well as providing local intelligence and assistance to the Indian forces, they gave support to a skeleton civil administration without which the Kashmir capital would have ground to a halt.

One of the tasks taken on by some of the Sikh troops on the first day of the airlift was to stage a flag march through Srinagar to seek to reassure the city's deeply alarmed population. Sheikh Abdullah's son and political heir Farooq Abdullah, then about ten years old, has keen memories of the troops' arrival. 'I had never seen Sikhs in the Indian army, and for me it was a surprising thing to see these aircraft come. There were a number of aircraft coming in and going out. People used to get on to the housetops and see these Spitfires or something like that go up and down. I was taken to the airport one day, and there I saw these ferocious Sikhs, over six feet tall. They had rings of copper around their turbans. Ferocious looking people.'

Another of the initial duties of the Indian army, it seems, was to disperse a march through Srinagar of supporters of the pro-Pakistan Muslim Conference.[13] Sheikh Abdullah's support in Srinagar was strong, but it was not universal. Some of his rivals and critics were still in jail while others had made their way to Pakistan. But many of their supporters were still around. There were persistent press reports of saboteurs or enemy agents amid the local population. Jinnah's private secretary, a Kashmiri, was detained in Srinagar—an episode widely reported in the Indian press as evidence of Pakistan's attempts to incite the local population. The *Hindustan Times* also recorded that an 'all-out drive against "fifth columnists" which has been in progress of for the past many days was intensified by the volunteers of the "Bachao Fauj" [Protection Force]'. A few days later, the *Statesman*'s correspondent, travelling around by jeep, found that 'every inlet to the city had its posse of volunteers, some of whom were armed with guns, others with swords and sticks'. As an additional precaution, the Muslim Conference stronghold around Srinagar's main mosque had been 'put under a curfew, leniently administered'.[14]

By most accounts, the Kashmir capital was largely free of communal tension. That's certainly the recollection of Harshi Anand, then a teenage

schoolgirl in Srinagar. She recalled the excitement generated by the volunteers. Most of the local youngsters had joined the National Conference's militia, including her elder sister and brother. Her family, Punjabi Hindus by origin, greatly respected Sheikh Abdullah. She also had keen memories of the anxiety about shortage of food and supplies. 'There was no sugar, no salt, and there was absolute darkness because they had captured [the power station at] Mahura. We were eating honey. And eating the best of apples, because previously apples used to be exported. I've never eaten such nice apples.'

A sense of the growing alarm in the Kashmir capital occasioned both by the proximity of the fighting and the growing food and power crisis was captured by a British woman writing to friends or relatives in England. Gwen Burton was staying at Nedou's hotel, by far the smartest hotel in Srinagar and a focal point for the expatriate community and the local elite. It was also where the foreign pilots gathered. Her letter home appears to have been written during the first week of November, and gives a sense of the apprehension and excited rumour in the city:

> Here we still are + in 'the thick of it'! . . . The Raiders are in great numbers + lots have split up with small gangs + looting + throwing the villages around. A large force tried to take the Aerodrome on Tuesday, but were beaten off by our troops . . . . The road is evidently blocked with troops coming up from India. 16 Armoured Cars arrived yesterday. All have got the wind up more than ever today, as there was heavy firing + bombing last night. We are the only people in the place who has a Wet Battery Wireless set: and are bombarded with people coming in + listening to the News of Kashmir. The raiders cut of[f] the Electricity about 10 days ago, burnt the Power House + so we've been in darkness ever since + only have candles to see by, which is very depressing. Now they are frightened of their cutting the water supply . . . . There is no daily bul[l]etin issued + hence rumours go around + one does not know what to believe . . . . They say there are Pakastan [sic] Army Officers among the Raiders + that this attack on Kashmir has been instigated by Pakastan, as the Raiders are well armed + there must be a lot of old soldiers among them. We never thought we would be in the siege of Srinagar! Not at all pleasant + very nerve racking. Food is beginning to get scarce[,] no butter in the hotel now + flour very scarce . . . . We have had lovely weather here so far + only hope it goes on.[15]

Adding to Gwen Burton's concern was the advent of the foreign press. 'A lot of newspaper correspondents have flown up here + are in the Hotel. The Times, Reuters[,] Daily Telegraph[,] New York Herald etc—it's all very disturbing.'

During Ajit Bhattacharjea's brief foray into Srinagar, he found a huddle of journalists in familiar and distinctly undisturbing form. 'At the old Nedou's Hotel, a group of correspondents was gathered on the lawn, drinking beer under the mild autumn afternoon sun, recovering from writing about a war being fought not ten miles away.'[16] Quite by chance, foreign correspondents were better placed to report the initial stages of the crisis than the local papers and news agencies. The summer of 1947 had been gruelling, with the reporting not only of the rush towards independence and the creation of the new nation of Pakistan, but also of the intense bloodletting and communal tension amid which the Raj had ended. By mid-October, with the killing fields of Punjab a little calmer and other international stories—notably the Middle East—competing for space, several foreign correspondents had decided they needed a break. It was just the right time of year to head for Kashmir, which had developed a reputation as the Europeans' preferred holiday destination, and had the hotels, house boats, clubs and restaurants to cater to foreign tastes.

Margaret Parton of the *Herald Tribune* had chosen Kashmir not only for a rest, but for 'an illicit vacation' on a houseboat with her new lover and future husband Eric Britter. He was the correspondent of the *Times* of London, India-born and an Urdu speaker. Neither had ever visited Kashmir. 'We are living on a houseboat, as everyone must do when they come to Kashmir,' Parton enthused in a letter to her mother. 'It is a fantastic, heavenly, scrolled and carved houseboat, complete with living room, dining room, and (I might emphasize) three bedrooms.' They discovered that Sydney Smith of the *Daily Express* (known to his colleagues as Bill Sydney-Smith) and his wife Pat were in a neighbouring houseboat. These parallel trysts were soon disturbed by the tribesmen's invasion. When Parton and Britter sought to leave Kashmir as scheduled, by bus to Rawalpindi, they were told that the previous day's bus had been turned back by invading tribesmen. While Sydney Smith made for the front line, Margaret Parton and her partner moved into Nedou's hotel and got to work.

> At first we didn't realize what a story we had on our hands, and actually made arrangements to leave with the R.A.F, when it evacuated

> all the British to Rawalpindi. Once again we packed our bags, and early in the morning of the 27th rode out to the airport where we were scheduled to take the first plane out. But what should we find but Indian Army troops pouring in, and among them some friends of Erics who tipped us off to the news that the tribesmen were only 17 miles from Srinagar, and might very well capture the city. So feeling very brave and noble (at least I did) we pulled our baggage out of the plane and set up a miniature press room among the bedding rolls and suitcases—much to the amusement of passing pilots and army officers, who took pictures of us and obligingly gave us news of burning villages and other matters of interest. We stayed on the field all day, lunching on Indian army food provided by a generous soldier, which we ate with our fingers—and late in the afternoon sent off our stories by a friendly pilot who promised to deliver them to Delhi, from where they could be cabled.

She recalled 'chortling with pleasure that aside from Alan Moor[e]head (who wasn't competition) and Bill Sydney-Smith (who was, but who soon managed to get himself captured by the tribesmen) we were the only foreign correspondents in Kashmir'.[17]

The *Daily Express*'s Sydney Smith got the best exclusives of the Kashmir crisis. But once captured by the tribesmen, he could only file his insider's account of the invading forces and of the besieged mission at Baramulla when the heat of the crisis had passed. The others had not only time, but need, to drink beer at Nedou's, because the hotel bar was where they found the couriers for their news copy. Margaret Parton wrote to her mother from Nedou's hotel on 3 November to tell her: 'This has really been a wonderful news break for Eric and me—particularly if they're playing our stories as I think they must be. Here we are—the only foreign correspondents in Kashmir, and 150 newsmen in Delhi panting to get here and completely frustrated!' But the exclusive was coming to an end, for just a couple of paragraphs on she reported: 'Later—Well, it couldn't last forever—two other correspondents have just blown in. Much excitement and noise here in the hotel garden, with people crouching over maps and trying to figure out just what is happening. All very confusing.' This was perhaps the sort of scene which prompted a correspondent for the *Hindustan Times* to remark, waspishly: 'It is quite impossible for a correspondent based on Nedous hotel at Srinagar to know, by establishing his own facts, the truth about the raiders.'[18]

Kashmir's own newspapers were not well placed to report the crisis enveloping them. The local media was still in its infancy. Some newspapers—including the English language *Kashmir Times*—had been shut down for being too critical of the maharaja and his administration. One of Pakistan's main newspapers *Dawn* complained that any Kashmir publications which referred to the prospect of accession to Pakistan faced censorship and closure.[19] Most Indian newspapers had little or no reporting presence in Kashmir. Not a lot happened there in normal times. The first military test of independent India, the conflict that set the tone of its relations with Pakistan for two generations and beyond, was initially largely beyond the scrutiny of the Indian press. While Sydney Smith had managed to report from the front line as early as 26 October, little battlefield reporting appeared in the main Indian newspapers for another week.

There was an opportunity here for aspiring Kashmiri journalists. Sat Paul Sahni, a Kashmir-born, Kashmiri-speaking Punjabi, made the most of it. He was well connected in Srinagar, and had already spent some months the previous year on what you might now call work experience with *The Times* in London. When the first contingent of Indian correspondents from Delhi managed to reach Srinagar he was able to make himself useful. He was co-opted by Mohammed Subhan, correspondent with the Bombay-based *Times of India* and its Delhi sister paper, the *News Chronicle*. When Subhan returned to Delhi after a few days, Sahni became—in effect—the *News Chronicle*'s reporter in Kashmir. Within a week or two, he had received accreditation from the Indian defence ministry. A rookie reporter had become a fully fledged war correspondent.[20] But as the Indian army settled in Srinagar, military bureaucracy entrenched itself with the troops, and eventually the only way to file was through the army's public relations officer or, if particularly urgent, by morse code through army signals. 'All the reports had to be handed over to the PRO,' Sahni recalled. 'We had no means to file directly. And they scrutinised every report at the Armed Forces Information Office in New Delhi, at the defence ministry. It was virtual censorship.'

Right from the start of the crisis, there was a chorus of complaints from the press that they weren't being allowed into Kashmir, and once there couldn't report as they wished. The only journalists who could travel to Srinagar were those who made the journey with the Indian army, or at least with its blessing. The *Herald Tribune*, which was in the fortunate position of having Margaret Parton already in place in Kashmir, carried

a news agency report dated 1 November reporting that the 'government of India barred entry of all newspaper correspondents into Kashmir today a move regarded as tantamount to censorship of the fighting'. Some British journalists complained that their cabled reports of the crisis were either suppressed or delayed.[21] An American, Jim Michaels, was the correspondent in Delhi for the United Press news agency, and once the fighting started he was determined to get to Kashmir. 'As soon as the Indian army intervention began,' he recalled, 'I tried my damnedest to get to Srinagar. All the reporters . . . were clamoring in vain to be allowed to fly in. The Indians wanted no witnesses to what might turn out to be their first debacle. A drinking buddy, a British charter pilot, offered to smuggle me on his plane which had been requisitioned along with anything that could carry troops. I went to Willingdon [airfield] . . . . At a signal from my pilot buddy I sprinted across the tarmac, but just as I was about to climb on board the [military police] grabbed me. Good try!'[22] The restrictions eventually eased, but it was not until 5 November that Robert Trumbull of the *New York Times*, one of the most prominent Delhi-based foreign correspondents, managed to file with a Srinagar dateline.

The Indian press corps was somewhat more successful in finding a way into Srinagar. By the time battle was joined for the Kashmir capital, reporters had mustered sufficient force to give a vivid if partisan sense of the unfolding drama. The initial tussles with the Indian army, which was rapidly reinforcing—on busier days up to 500 Indian troops were disembarking at the Srinagar airstrip—and India's use of fighter planes to strafe the raiders' trucks forced the tribesmen to operate increasingly as a guerrilla force. Their command was splintered, communications were haphazard, and there was little obvious sense of strategy. Nevertheless, armed contingents of the lashkar got close to some of the key points around the Kashmir capital.

The Sandhurst graduate who was one of the architects of the invasion, Akbar Khan—adopting the nom de guerre of the eighth century General Tariq, the man who led an Islamic army into Spain then burnt his own boats to rule out the option of retreat—was not part of the initial wave, but followed on a week later. He caught up with tribal reinforcements heading to the front:

> The lorries were full to the brim, carrying forty, fifty and some as many as seventy. Men were packed inside, lying on the roofs, sitting on the engines and hanging on to the mudguards. They were men of all ages from grey beards to teenagers. Few were well-dressed—

> many had torn clothes, and some were even without shoes. But they were good to look at—handsome and awe-inspiring.
>
> Their weapons were a varied assortment—British, French, German and Frontier made rifles—long and short barrelled pistols and even shot guns. Some had no fire arms at all, they were going to take them from the enemy. For the present they carry only daggers.
>
> Their transport was equally heterogeneous—ranging from road worthy buses to anything on four wheels capable of crawling . . . . They were in high spirits. Above the rumble and din could be heard a chorus of war songs and an occasional drum beat. The air was charged with enthusiasm.[23]

By Akbar Khan's own account, he advanced during the night through Baramulla and on to within a few miles of the centre of Srinagar, where in the early hours of 30 October he witnessed Mohmand tribesmen trying and failing to overrun an Indian military post. The next morning, *Dawn* bore the banner headline 'Liberation Army Advance Guards Enter Srinagar'—though it also made space for a fanciful account that 400 Indian paratroops had been killed while landing, and made the dubious assertion that the 'local population has now completely identified itself with the Liberation Army'.[24]

Whether or not this and similar accounts are exaggerated, it is clear that in the early days of November both Srinagar and its airfield were imperilled. Brigadier L.P. 'Bogey' Sen flew up to Srinagar on 2 November, and recalled that evening seeing a vista of destruction. 'The sky was lit up by a red glow of burning huts and houses, the flames licking their way up to the skies. It was obvious that the raiders had moved out of Baramula in large numbers and were announcing their entry into the Valley by setting fire to village after village.' On the same day, Max Desfor, a photographer with the Associated Press news agency, managed to get an aerial view of the devastation. He was drinking buddies with some American pilots who, after war service, had started working for the fledgling Indian airlines. His friends received orders to fly Indian troops into Srinagar, and obligingly signed Max up as a flight engineer so he could make the journey. 'We picked up troops and supplies and I made their photos in the plane and then in formation on the tarmac in Srinagar. Heading back . . . the pilot flew at a low altitude over the combat area, which enabled me, in the co-pilot's seat, to shoot the smoking villages and other scenes. I believe they were the first "action" photos to come out of Kashmir.' He spotted more than twenty villages in flames, extending to within about twenty

miles of the Kashmir capital.[25] The raiders still had a clear numerical advantage. Some were managing to advance through cover of darkness, others were outflanking the Indian positions along the Baramulla road. A substantial number were, it seems, approaching by another route, through the skiing resort of Gulmarg.

By 3 November, up to 1,000 raiders had congregated at the village of Badgam, about ten miles south-west of Srinagar and within five miles of the airfield. They were initially mistaken for Kashmiri refugees from the fighting. Their attack on an Indian patrol was the closest the conflict had then come to a battle. 'Standing on a hillock I saw Indian troops engage and repulse invaders north of Badgam,' reported the *Statesman*'s correspondent. 'The invaders, who mustered about 700, outnumbered the Indian patrol party by at least six to one.' The fighting went on from mid-afternoon until dusk, with the invaders using mortar fire, while Indian troops were assisted by aerial attacks on the raiders. 'At present,' the *Statesman* reported, 'the tribesmen, who are the core of the invaders' forces, are spread over the Valley and are extremely mobile.'[26]

By the end of several hours of bitter fighting, the Indian army had lost an officer, Major Somnath Sharma, and fourteen other men, with a further twenty-six wounded. While the raiders had, at least by Indian accounts, suffered considerably heavy casualties, they had not been repulsed, indeed they had gained an advantage. If their goal had been to get to the airstrip, that was now within reach. Brigadier Bogey Sen of the Indian army later argued that the lashkar, by failing to exploit its success at Badgam, 'missed the chance of a lifetime. Why [the enemy] failed to move towards the airfield is unfathomable. Just three miles from Badgam lay features from which he could have commanded the airstrip, which, if denied to us, would have swung the balance to a marked degree in his favour. Just one aircraft hit and damaged on the airstrip, or hit in the air and forced to crash-land, would have made it unusable.'[27] It seems, to judge by the testimony of Khurshid Anwar, the veteran of the Muslim League National Guard who had led the lashkar in triumph into Baramulla a week earlier, that the raiders did seek to advance on the airfield. In his account of what appears to be the same action—recounted in an interview to the Muslim League newspaper *Dawn* several weeks later—Anwar said that he and about twenty others got to within a mile of the airstrip, knocking out several Indian army pickets, but lacked the strength to press home the attack.[28]

India's official history of the conflict records that news of the fighting 'so near the Srinagar airfield and the heavy casualties sustained

in that battle brought home to everybody the gravity of the situation in Kashmir.' The next morning, India's deputy prime minister Sardar Patel flew to Srinagar, accompanied by the defence minister Baldev Singh and a British officer Lt Colonel Billy Short (apparently working on the defence minister's staff but clearly in breach of the supreme commander's order to all British officers to keep out of Kashmir). They spent a few hours talking to the key Indian military commanders. It's not clear whether they were trying to stiffen morale and provide reassurance that reinforcements were on their way, or to sense whether India would hold on to the Valley, or to improvise a new military strategy. The Indian forces clearly faced a problem—over the first couple of weeks of the airlift, there was a succession of different officers in command on the ground in Kashmir. If later memoirs are an accurate guide, the two key Indian officers in and around Srinagar, Harbakhsh Singh and Bogey Sen, had little respect for each other. The feud was still being fought almost sixty years later by retired army officers loyal to the memory of one or the other. Sen claimed credit for reversing the military tide and gaining the upper hand against the invaders. Singh, perhaps a touch more convincingly, insisted that although he was outranked, the devising and implementing of the military plan rested with him.

Harbakhsh Singh decided that given the intense fighting close to the Kashmir capital, those soldiers of the First Sikh battalion deployed further out near Pattan should be pulled back to defend Srinagar and its airstrip. It was their second strategic retreat in little more than a week. The execution of this order has entered Indian army legend. Harbakhsh Singh dropped the withdrawal instruction on the First Sikhs' position from a low-flying military aircraft. This was, he insisted later, to avoid wireless intercept—though it also reflected the hazards of movement across the Kashmir Valley, and the acute difficulties in communication and coordination. The Sikh troops had no vehicles to use in their redeployment, and were obliged to carry equipment and ammunition in horse-drawn tongas which, as there were no horses available either, they are reputed to have pulled themselves.[29] Bogey Sen suggested that this pulling back of the Sikh battalion was part of a plan to lure the raiders into an attack on Srinagar. While that may have been the effect, the intention was simply to buttress the still shaky Indian defence of Kashmir's premier city, for which Indian troops were obliged to commandeer wall maps from Nedou's hotel and the Srinagar Club to plan deployments.[30]

In the early hours of 6 November, Srinagar suffered its closest exposure to war. It was the high watermark of the tribal army's advance.

The *Times of India* reported that throughout the night, 'the city reverberated to the sound of machine-guns and mortar firing. About 1 a.m. the invaders made a daring attempt to enter the city about $4^1/_2$ miles west.'

> About 300 strong, the invaders' column bumped into a road block laid by Indian troops.
>
> The engagement lasted till dawn, when the invaders broke off and dispersed . . .
>
> The invaders are now trying to infiltrate into the city disguised in Kashmiri dress, and passing for 'locals'. But the State National Militia are effectively operating against them. Lorry-loads of fifth columnists are rounded up every day.[31]

It was more of a skirmish than an outright assault on the city. The Indian army by this stage had flown more than 3,000 troops into the Kashmir Valley, and every day the military pendulum was swinging more emphatically against the raiders. The attackers were well aware of this. By this stage in the operation, it is probable that more tribesmen were leaving the Valley for home than were entering it to support the jihad. For the residents of Srinagar, though, the sound of automatic weapons and artillery, and the bombing raids mounted by the Indian air force, added to the sense of anxiety. 'Within the city,' reported Margaret Parton, 'the absence of regular news channels has turned each bazaar into a dangerous rumor factory, where ideas woven out of panic and ignorance are carried to adjacent bazaars with the punctuation of near-by gunfire.'[32]

Having tried and failed to fight their way into Srinagar, the raiders seem to have come to the conclusion that the city had become impregnable. They gathered in large numbers at Shalateng, just outside the city to the north-west, perhaps with the intention of making a more determined advance, though possibly with a view to regrouping and heading out of the Valley. Early on 7 November there were sharp clashes with Indian troops. Newly arrived armoured cars were deployed by the Indian army—and according to some accounts, the raiders, who had been waiting eagerly for the Pakistan army to supply them with armoured vehicles, mistook the contingent as their own and cheered their arrival enthusiastically, only to be mown down. The Indian air force also hit the tribesmen's ground positions. In a well-executed manoeuvre, Indian army units took up positions partly encircling the raiders. 'I gave the word GO,' recounted Brigadier Sen, 'and hell broke loose . . . . There was complete confusion

in the enemy positions. The defectors of 4 J & K Infantry, the Mahsuds, Wazirs, Afridis and Mohmands, in trying to escape the fire that was hitting them from three sides, and seeing the bayonet charge descending on them, rushed in all directions and, crashing into one another, turned and fled westwards.'[33] Bogey Sen claimed the credit for planning and commanding what came to be known as the Battle of Shalateng, and securing the emphatic defeat of the raiders within twenty minutes. His detractors insist he had little hand in the preparations, and only turned up at the battlefield as the fighting was subsiding. What's beyond dispute is that the clash at Shalateng prompted a fast and furious retreat by the raiders. The Indian account talks of 472 enemy dead on the battlefield, with a further 146 bodies recovered between Shalateng and Baramulla as the retreating forces were harried from the air and on the ground. The raiders left behind 138 buses and trucks. Their field ambulances were overrun, as was their command position. There were hardly any Indian casualties.

'The Liberation Forces three-pronged advance on Srinagar continued unabated in spite of strong opposition,' *Dawn* reported the next morning, citing the provisional government of Azad Kashmir. But it wasn't true. Khurshid Anwar told the same newspaper several weeks later how India's use of armoured cars and intensifying air attacks forced the raiders' retreat. 'The tribesmen suffered casualties and they could not even pick up their dead.'[34] Akbar Khan put a different gloss on the withdrawal. Casualties at Shalateng were modest, he insisted—because most of the tribesmen had already pulled out. 'The withdrawal of the tribesmen had not been a step by step falling back, but a breaking away and a total disappearance,' he claimed. 'One moment they were there and the next moment they were gone.' His political ally, Ibrahim Khan, echoed this account of a force which evaporated with extraordinary rapidity. The tribesmen were attacked from behind at Shalateng, he asserted, and fearing 'that their line of communication back to their base may be cut off from behind, they lost heart . . . they disintegrated into smaller groups and vanished.' A semi-official Pakistani account of the fighting recorded that tribesmen had started to leave the Kashmir Valley and head home from the evening of 31 October, but that Shalateng 'precipitated a general withdrawal'.[35] Whether it was a retreat or a rout, and it was probably both, the laskhar never recovered from the encounter at Shalateng. And the collapse of the armed attempt to seize the Kashmir Valley for Pakistan caused, and continues to excite, acrimony and recrimination within Pakistan's military. 'The abandonment of the conduct of war to tribesmen with bolt action rifles, while the Indians attacked them with Spitfires,

Tempests, Harvards and Daimler/Humber/GMC Armoured cars,' wrote a retired major in the Pakistan army, Agha Humayun Amin, 'was without any doubt one of the most disgraceful acts in Pakistani military history.'[36]

It was not the end of the fighting. There were pockets of resistance in the Valley—some of them well entrenched. Azad Kashmir forces were still active and effective in Poonch and adjoining areas of Jammu province, where the fighting continued for another year. They also continued to control the section of the princely state west of the Valley. But Indian forces, in their first active deployment, has secured the vale of Kashmir and seen off an acute military threat. Brigadier Sen and his soldiers advanced in the wake of the retreating lashkar, with hardly a shot fired. On the evening of 7 November, Sikh soldiers occupied Pattan. The following day Indian troops entered Baramulla. Four days later, Uri came under Indian army control, and the Kashmir Valley had been cleared of attackers.

A day or two after Indian troops entered Baramulla, Francis Rath made his way out of the town to Srinagar. He passed close to Shalateng and saw the aftermath of the battle. There were tribesmen's corpses in profusion—most, apparently, the victim of Indian air strikes rather than ground attacks. 'Dogs and vultures were eating the bodies,' he told me. 'I saw it myself.' The *Herald Tribune*'s Margaret Parton, heading in the opposite direction in the wake of the Indian army, encountered one of the most haunting images of her years as a reporter in India: 'the look of a particular, huge, red-bearded tribesman lying dead in a ditch by the highway to Baramullah, his hill-made rifle still clutched in his hand.'[37] By the standards of modern warfare, the number of casualties incurred during the tribal invasion of the Kashmir Valley was modest. It's impossible to offer a figure with any confidence, but when civilian deaths are included, it's likely that the total number of those killed in the Kashmir Valley in late October and early November 1947 was in the low thousands. But the political wounds to Kashmir's body politic suffered during those weeks of upheaval have never fully healed.

{9}

'Ten Days of Terror'

For a week and a half, the survivors of the attack on St Joseph's mission, holed up in the hospital's baby ward, had little hard information about the ebb and flow of the fighting for the Kashmir Valley. They knew that battle had been joined. They would have picked up snippets of information. They could hear the trucks full of tribesmen heading up the Valley road towards Srinagar. And they had even more pressing evidence of the Indian counter-attack: the tribesmen used the mission as a transport depot and command post, prompting the Indian air force to stage repeated bombing raids. Their main concern, though, was not the fate of Kashmir, but the narrower battle for survival as captives amid the crowded confines of a single room.

On my most recent visit to Baramulla, the ward bore a more tranquil aspect. A brass cross inlaid into the stone-flagged floor paid tribute to Mother Teresalina, who died in this room, and the other victims of the attack. Of the thirteen sturdy hospital beds, two were occupied. Even that was something of a renaissance for the hospital. The mission has always found it difficult to recruit a doctor-cum-surgeon. Dr Melanie, herself a Franciscan nun, was the doctor in service when I first visited St Joseph's. But cancer forced her to stop work, and then to move to the mission house in New Delhi where she died. The religious order had no one to offer in her place. And Baramulla wasn't an attractive posting for a lay medical specialist—Kashmir was too turbulent, and at the convent, the erratic electricity supply made for a spartan lifestyle with hurricane lamps the main form of lighting and water always in short supply. On top of that, St Joseph's made a demand that many Indian gynaecologists would find difficult—they didn't insist on a Catholic or indeed a Christian, but any doctor they hired would have to abide by the church's teachings: no abortion, and no contraception.

The catastrophic earthquake in Kashmir in October 2005 was the occasion of a solution of sorts. It occurred just as the centenary celebrations

of St Joseph's School were being staged, with the bishop in attendance. 'Everything went at seventy degrees, and everything fell out of all the cupboards,' recalled Sister Elaine, the sister superior. But the mission suffered nothing more than superficial damage. The epicentre was across the ceasefire line in the area controlled by Pakistan, and that's where almost all the tens of thousands of deaths occurred. But there were also hundreds killed, and tens of thousands without homes, on the Indian side. The nuns were furiously busy—'we climbed mountains which we'd never climbed before,' said Sister Elaine—and the mission hospital provided a base for medical practitioners who came to Kashmir to respond to the emergency. One of these doctors, a nun from another religious order, decided to stay on at St Joseph's, and slowly hospital wards which had seen no in-patients for years came back into service. When I visited almost a year after the earthquake, three of the wards were open, and the operating theatre was in use for obstetrics. And there were thirty-three nursing students in residence.

The convent doctor at the time of the tribesmen's attack, Greta Barretto, was a devout Catholic, though she was not in holy orders. She had been recruited to take the place of a medically qualified nun who had taken extended home leave. On 27 October 1947, Dr Barretto had seen her husband shot dead. She had witnessed two others, Tom Dykes and Mother Teresalina, die a lingering death because she had no way of stemming their blood loss. She had two more patients with gunshot wounds, little medicine, no power, and was hemmed in to a small hospital ward every inch of which was taken up by a frightened, cowering mass of nuns, refugees, and seekers of sanctuary. In addition, the Pathan tribesmen expected her to tend their injuries. Dr Barretto's daughter, Angela Aranha, recalled her mother telling one particular story of that ordeal. 'My mother, she had to stitch up the nose of one fellow whose nose had got torn. It was the very same day that my father had been killed. And she said to him: you shot my husband this morning. So he said: yes, we had to do it because in time of war, everything is fair.'

On the first night, the memories of the viciousness of the attack and of the deaths of friends and colleagues still numbingly fresh, the multitude in the baby ward had a restless few hours of repose. 'I found myself an empty space on the floor, a corner of somebody's blanket, + tried to sleep,' wrote Father Shanks. 'The guards settled themselves one by one + dropped off':

> The floor was hard, the air in the room cold + fetid . . . . I tried all kinds of positions without avail . . . . The events of the day kept

> crowding in upon me: the looting and destruction I had myself witnessed . . . . A stifled scream from one of the women startled us into wakefulness . . . we followed her shaking finger as it pointed to the opposite window. Outlined against the red glow from the burning village, looking incredibly evil in the dim light from the lamp, several of those faces were pressed against the windows . . . . The sight completely unnerved the women on that side, + there was a wild scramble for sanctuary on the other side. Someone shook the guards into activity + they ran outside. There was much shouting + arguing, ending at last in the departure of the intruders.[1]

Father Shanks remembered a night 'torn to shreds by a succession of alarms', and eventually being awakened by the rattle of the bucket at the well as the Pathans started drawing water, and by the smell of boiling coffee, brewed by the nuns on a paraffin stove.

On subsequent nights, again tribesmen were ordered to stand guard against any of their number who wished to loot or assault. On occasion, truck drivers who had been cajoled or threatened into transporting the tribesmen were co-opted into the task. Given the prevalence of sexual assault during the invasion, the women in the ward were at grave risk. And as Father Shanks later recounted, there was a constant danger of abduction, particularly at night:

> All went well until the night when our two guards, after a lengthy talk outside, demanded that I should send out one of the Indian Catholic Nurses for 'questioning'. Playing the village idiot . . . I went out and spent five hectic minutes in argument with them. (T)he argument broke down when I was presented with the brutal alternative of either delivering up the girl or being responsible for the guards going away and returning with the whole band to abduct our womanfolk; easy enough to decide that the answer must be no, but it was ever so difficult to pronounce. Feeling as if the bottom had dropped out of everything, Father Mallett and I waited in the darkness for the two to return with their companions and only our Guardian Angels could help us now. (T)hey did, a sudden shout from the dispensary, and the whole band were ordered into their lorries to depart for the fighting lines.[2]

From that night on, the men of the mission kept guard themselves. 'A nightmarish business it was, listening and watching those four panes of glass in the door, outlined sharply against the bright moonlight outside,'

recalled Father Shanks, 'and waiting for the inevitable moment when they would be back peering in curiously' at the sleeping women and children.

The local Hindu and Sikh women who had taken refuge at the mission—there were apparently seven such families, with a total of twenty children—were most at risk of abduction. They were dressed up as local Christians, wearing European clothes and with their hair cut short, much in the fashion of Anglo-Indians. The Sikh men also cut their hair and shaved their beards. Several of the families seeking sanctuary, the Pasrichas and the Raths among them, were among the most prosperous in the town. The two priests used the crisis to seek converts. Mother Teresalina had died with the words—according to clerical accounts—'*J'offre ma vie pour la conversion du Cachemire*' (I offer my life for the conversion of Kashmir).[3] As she was on her deathbed, the Mill Hill fathers were lining up souls to save. Father Shanks recounted how his clerical companion, Father Mallett, had whispered to him that he had received a prominent local Hindu and all his family into the church. 'I instructed them in the essentials, and they have promised that, if they ever get out alive, they will complete the instruction + live as Catholics,' he confided. '"Good work, Gerry,"' the older priest replied. The *Daily Express*'s Sydney Smith also recounted how this same Hindu family 'embraced the Catholic church'. It seems to have been a fleeting embrace, as the family concerned, the Pasrichas, nowadays insist they are and have always been Hindus.

There was quite a range of caste and social background among those crowded into the hospital ward. Not all were easily reconciled to the indignities of life in captivity. Father Shanks was irritated by one Hindu woman 'who sat in a corner nursing her baby ordering anyone within range to clear away the dirty napkins (myself included) refusing to arrange her veil in the [Christian] fashion and remained sour faced to the end'. Another, Shivu, a woman sweeper, came with her ten children—'she and her flock of chattering sparrows crawled under a single bedcover on the floor each night, and their smothered laughter was the last sound before the ward began its restless sleep'. No local Muslim families sought sanctuary at the convent because, it must be assumed, they did not initially consider themselves a likely target of their co-religionist raiders.

Among the throng was a young sex worker. She captured Father Shanks's attention, and he set down a vivid description of her:

> A young woman passed by the open doorway; her flame-red bodice, bright yellow saree, the cheap jewel in her left nostril, long ear-rings and above all the cigarette which drooped from the corner of her

> mouth, struck a note of incongruity in the Convent surroundings. That she was ill was only too evident. The flaunting dress could not conceal the painful dragging of her footsteps. The dirty grey of her face was too much for the rouge wh[ich] she had too sketchily applied. The cynical twist of the lips belied the bold star of her lustreless eyes; the one invited, the other showed her opinion of those who accepted. She might have been anything between 18 + 28.
>
> 'Who is that, Father?'
>
> 'The lady's name, I understand, is Sushila, and she is a dancer from Bombay. And that is all nice girls are supposed to know about her'; Fr. X. recognised the type. They had strayed into the College often enough on their way up to Srinagar, and it had been his embarrassing duty to show them the gate, under the sniggers of the senior boys.
>
> 'But how did she get here?'
>
> 'With the rest of the crowd that comes up to Kashmir in the season; fell sick + got stranded without her fare home, + the Sisters picked her up + brought her in. She's pretty far gone in T.B., poor soul. Smokes like a chimney, too, which doesn't help.'
>
> 'Poor child! God keep her out of the hands of the Pathans.'[4]

She also caught the attention of Sydney Smith, who wrote of 'the pathetic reserve and loneliness of 19-year-old Kaushalya, a pretty and sullen Hindu dancing girl'. She achieved a modest degree of literary immortality when the novelist H.E. Bates, borrowing liberally from Smith's description, worked her into the cast list of *The Scarlet Sword*—and indeed she features in some of the more lurid jacket designs of what is not at all a lurid novel. Sir George Cunningham, the governor of Pakistan's Frontier Province, was sufficiently intrigued to note in his diary that he had received a list of those successfully evacuated from the mission 'ending with "1 prostitute Khushalia"!'[5] From there, her story fades from the historical record.

On the day after the initial attack, John Thompson, the British businessman based in Baramulla, joined the throng in the hospital's baby ward. He made the final leg of the journey to the convent, having been separated from Sydney Smith, by motorbike, apparently with a tribesman riding pillion. He would have brought with him a fairly grim assessment of the balance of forces around Baramulla, and of the prospects for an early end to the captives' ordeal. Once confined to the hospital ward, Thompson's most pressing concern was to arrange the evacuation of the two women with gunshot wounds, the Belgian mother superior,

Mother Aldetrude, and the British-born Celia Pasricha, who was later to become his mother-in-law. Father Shanks also badgered the tribesmen and those in authority over them to arrange a medical evacuation, but with little immediate success.

It was four days after the attack that 'one of our party discovered a friendly lorry driver detailed to take two badly wounded Pathans to Abbottabad,' Shanks recorded. 'I wrote a note to the Camp Commandant, begging permission for him to take our wounded also. With surprising promptness he consented, at 4 in the evening an antique lorry bumped off down the main road with two wounded women, a Sister to look after them, and one of our men charged with the task of explaining our plight to the world.' The nun who made the journey was a Scottish nurse, Barbara McPhilimy. John Thompson had the responsibility of ensuring the safety of the women and getting word out about the attack.

Thompson later told British diplomats how he and the nurse were smuggled into a tribesmen's lorry, and reached Abbottabad at midnight on Friday. On the way they passed between 100 and 200 trucks 'full of fully armed tribesmen' heading into the Kashmir Valley. 'All the villages en route had been burnt and looted.' Thompson brought confirmation as to the effectiveness of the invasion force. 'From my observations the Tribesmen appeared to be well supplied with lorries, petrol and ammunition. They have also got both 2″ and 3″ Mortars.' He emphasised the need for help for those trapped at the convent, not omitting to urge that 'it is imperative that full compensation be given to each and every person'.[6] John Thompson also carried a powerfully expressed plea for help from Father Shanks in the form of a letter to one of his clerical superiors, Father Meyer in Rawalpindi:

> About 60 of us are couped up in one ward in the Hospital. It is impossible to get any transport from the Military here, and we have no communication with anywhere else. Meanwhile we have no clothes, no bedding, no food, and are in danger of all kinds, from bands of Tribesmen marauding round. Everything is ruined, College, Hospital, Church and Convent and the bungalow has been burnt down. Probably the other buildings will not last much longer. We are in danger of bombing and machine gunning from the air, as there are Military Camps in both compounds and they have already machine-gunned us twice. *We must be got out* immediately, preferably by British Convoy, and evacuated either to Abbotabad or Pindi. If the British cannot do it, the Pakistan Government must be forced to do it.

> Six of us were killed on Monday and two others are lying seriously wounded, Rev. Mother and Mrs Pasricha. The others are unhurt, but in a constant state of nerves bordering on panic and cannot hang on much longer.
>
> Please lose no time in getting the necessary assistance. We shall need at least three lorries, well guarded, as there are still Tribesmen coming up the road.
>
> Hurry.[7]

It was signed, simply, 'George'. In spite of the best efforts of the church and key British and Pakistani officials, it was another week before 'the necessary assistance' reached the Baramulla mission.

During the long ordeal, those trapped in the hospital ward had an adequate supply of food, largely provided by the local community. 'Most of our stores had been taken away by the Pathans, and we had visions of slow starvation,' Father Shanks wrote, 'but the local Kashmiri villagers rallied round, robbed themselves of most of their winter stores of rice and grain. [I]ll treated, many of their friends and relations killed by their brethren from the Frontier, their wives and daughters abducted, yet they thought of us in the midst of their troubles. Many faced further ill treatment to bring us their offerings of rice, flour, milk and eggs.' But there was a sting in the tail of these clerical reminiscences. 'The Kashmiris had always been considered to be the most ungrateful people under the sun, but our opinion of them in those days underwent a radical change for the better.' Jamal Sheikh, the mission night watchman and the only Kashmiri Christian on the staff, ran a field kitchen which provided two meals a day, making good use of some preserved peaches which the looters had overlooked.

The survivors, to preserve their own well-being, needed to develop a rapport with their attackers and jailers. The good fortune of Major Saurab Hyat Khan's presence was compounded by that of the operation's second-in-command, Aslam Khan, an Afridi who had apparently grown up in Kashmir—'his four brothers were educated in our school and his father B.R.U.K. of the Kashmiri Army was an old friend,' reminisced Father Shanks.[8] Aslam Khan was apparently either one of the small number of Pakistan army officers informally deputed to assist the tribesmen, or had opted for Pakistan at Partition but had not formally enrolled in his new unit. As with Major Hyat Khan, Aslam Khan apparently described himself as an army deserter, though this is unlikely to be the full story.

Building up some basis of trust with the tribesmen was essential to surviving the crisis. The medical care provided by Dr Barretto and the nuns helped to bring down barriers. George Shanks related how 'a constant stream of wounded men had been pouring in to the Hospital for First Aid. The Sisters set up a temporary emergency dispensary on the verandah near our ward, and for hours each day and night two of them stood surrounded by battered and bloodstained Pathans, sewing up wounds, probing for bullets, while two of us men stood by in turns in case of trouble . . . . It certainly added to our knowledge of the Pathan character to watch them under treatment. Not a muscle would move as a gaping wound was cleansed and sewn up with a blunt needle and no anaesthetic. Truculent at first, they became more friendly and human under the gentle hands of the Sisters, even grateful sometimes.' There were regular gifts of cigarettes, and of apples for the children, and on one occasion a joint of beef was provided. A young Pathan, not yet a teenager, took a particular liking to Father Shanks, and one day presented the priest with a packet of cigarettes and a small amount of money he had chanced upon. To set against that was the tale of a tribesman who, once stitched up, insisted on pocketing the surgical scissors which had been used to help him. The sisters also sought to tend to the spiritual needs of the attackers—Sister Priscilla recounted how two badly injured Pathan fighters were baptised and instructed to seek God's forgiveness for their sins.

There was sufficient bonhomie between attackers and captives to produce two deeply atmospheric photographs, probably taken within minutes of each other, both of which were clearly treasured by their respective keepers. Among the photos and mementos George Shanks's sister Maureen Corboy parcelled up and posted to me was a picture apparently taken in Baramulla of George, thoughtful, in a black clerical cape, alongside a self-conscious Pathan (to judge by the headgear), with an ammunition belt draped over his shoulder. On the back of the photograph, in the hand of another of Shanks's sisters, is the inscription: 'G. making friends with the man who intended shooting him'.[9] Thousands of miles away in Bangalore, Angela Aranha—whose father was killed in the attack—showed me an almost identical photograph. The same Pathan, with the same ammunition belt, is on this occasion sandwiched between the two priests, with Father Mallett resplendent in white clerical robes. Both the Pathan and Father Shanks are smoking. Were these photographs taken at the time of the raid? Who was this Pathan? He does not look sufficiently young or confident to be either of the Afridi army officers who were at times based at the mission, Saurab

Hyat Khan and Aslam Khan. One possibility is Syed Sarwar Shah, the man who proclaimed himself 'Pope of the Mahsuds' and came to the aid of the survivors in burying their dead and ensuring their safety. 'His language sounded most unpontifical, but one word from him and the largest Pathan crawled under the nearest blade of grass,' Shanks recorded, while making clear that he developed a measure of camaraderie with the Mahsud leader. 'I shall always have a warm spot in my heart for Sarwar Shah, in spite of his casually mentioning afterwards that he had been all in favour of shooting us all at first.'[10]

The two British priests used to curry favour among the tribesmen by the transparent method of declaring 'Pakistan Zindabad' or 'Long Live Pakistan' amid much backslapping and handshaking. It didn't always work. Once Father Shanks came up against 'one nasty looking individual' who was 'part of a particularly unfriendly looking mob' who responded, not entirely inaccurately, 'you people are no friends of Pakistan'. Another occasional tactic was to complain to one tribal contingent about the excesses and incivility of another. 'We laughed for two days,' wrote the *Daily Express*'s Sydney Smith, 'over the friendly half-educated Afridi who, as he commiserated with us in broken English over our trials with the Mahsouds, said solemnly: "The Mahsouds are beasts. They haven't learned etiquette."'

The remarkable means by which Sydney Smith managed to join the crowd in the baby ward, and so gain a great front-page exclusive, is itself an astonishing story. Smith was certainly the scoop-wallah of the Kashmir crisis in 1947—the first (as far as can be made out) to report from the front line, the first into lashkar-held Baramulla, and the only journalist inside the convent during the invasion, he went on to track down and interview the adventurer Russell Haight, a US army veteran serving with the pro-Pakistan forces. Sydney Smith—'Bill' to his friends—was one of the most daredevil reporters from the golden age of London's Fleet Street.[11] His first big assignment was for the mass readership *Daily Express*, reporting the bitterly fought Spanish civil war of the late 1930s, where he was reputed to have been sentenced to death by both sides. During the Second World War, he flew Royal Air Force bombers and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. In July 1941, he crash-landed his badly damaged Blenheim bomber on a street in Rotterdam, saving the lives of his crew and avoiding casualties on the ground, and spent the next few years in German prisoner-of-war camps. He tunnelled his way out on one occasion, but was recaptured after half an hour. After his release he rejoined the *Daily Express*, and spent the next fifteen years as a foreign

correspondent based in Singapore, Delhi, Korea, Jerusalem, Paris and Algiers. His style appears to have been to operate on his own, rather than with the 'press pack', taking enormous risks to get to the heart of the action. He was 'hardbitten Fleet Street', in the judgement of his Delhi press corps contemporary Jim Michaels. Certainly, his fellow foreign correspondents in Delhi were always anxious that with Sydney Smith on a story, they needed to be on their toes. In October, the *Daily Express* sent a second correspondent to share the burden of reporting India's turmoil, a reporter who became one of the most renowned of his generation: James Cameron. Smith's copy still got more of the limelight.

Sydney Smith had an eye for a story, and knew the art of telling it well. The *Daily Express* was reduced to a trim four pages in austerity, post-war Britain. The only real space for foreign news was on the front page. Smith got more than his share of front-page splashes, whether on communal carnage in Punjab, rioting in the Indian capital ('Half a million people are fighting organised battles in the burning streets of Old Delhi tonight . . .'), or tales of British bravado ('Only one man, a British officer, tried to defend a train packed with Moslem refugees when Sikh raiders ambushed it . . .'). He was in Lahore in early October 1947 when he turned an unpromising story about the proclamation of a Republican provisional government by a small group of insurgents based just inside Kashmir into yet another front-page splash lead. It bore the banner headline: 'Sir Hari Singh warned: you're deposed'. Smith explained to *Daily Express* readers that 'Sir Hari Singh is the hereditary ruler of a State nearly as big as the British Isles. He has an income of more than £2,000,000 a year, a collection of jewels too rare to be priced, a string of racehorses, a fleet of cars.'

Smith's next byline appeared almost three weeks later, from the Kashmir capital, Srinagar. He was there on holiday with his wife relaxing on a houseboat, but finding himself where the action was, made the most of it. Although he was roughed up by his tribal captors, Smith told British diplomats that he had no real complaints:

> Mr Smith was well treated and hospitably entertained by the tribesmen . . . and they were at pains to stress that they had no hostility towards the British, with whom they had long had, on the whole, satisfactory relations. The trouble came from the wilder elements amongst the Mahsuds, who were complete savages. Many of them had never seen a white face . . . . These people were completely out of control and it was one such party which was responsible for the killing at the Baramulla convent and hospital.[12]

The survivors in the mission had suffered several days of cramped and fearful captivity by the time Sydney Smith joined them.[13] Francis Rath, one of those in the baby ward, witnessed him being ushered into the room by the back door one evening. 'He was caught by the kabailis near the front. They handled him very badly. I saw him coming in, in a bad shape. He was a nice man, but he was a terribly frightened man when he came there. We were all sitting there in the evening when there was a knock—this man brought bread for us. We opened up and we saw a strange man with him, a European.'

Smith's fellow captives, he later reported, were 'living in one ward in conditions of great hardship', while the tribesmen were encamped in the mission compound. Smith's friend, John Thompson had already headed out to Abbottabad with the two injured women. The British authorities had more or less given up on Smith—*The Times* correspondent had told them that he was probably dead. It had all the ingredients of a dramatic 'end of Empire' news story. Brave Britons in a faraway place keeping wild bands of Muslim insurgents at bay. What's more, Smith had the story to himself. But he had no means of filing to his news desk until he, and the others in the mission, was rescued.

The first attempts to evacuate the survivors came the day after the two wounded women reached Abbottabad. Sir George Cunningham, the governor of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, noted in his diary news of the attack on the Baramulla convent and the ensuing casualties. 'I rang up GHULAM SARWAR [the deputy commissioner, Hazara] at ABBOTTABAD and told him to send up a few lorries with responsible people and tribesmen to try and get out the Europeans who are left there.' Two days later, he got a call to say that the trucks had returned empty, the convent was gutted and there was nobody to be seen there. It was the best part of a week before a more thorough evacuation mission could be arranged. But word began to reach the outside world of the deaths at Baramulla, and the ordeal faced by the survivors and refuge-seekers. The Reuters news agency filed the story with a New Delhi, 3 November dateline. The following day, the *Hindustan Times* bore the front page banner headline: 'Raiders Attack Convent at Baramula'. The same day, the Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru acceded to a request from his opposite number in Pakistan for safe conduct for two Red Cross ambulances to evacuate those at the mission.[14]

In the meantime, the mission had to endure constant bombardment by the Indian air force. Their planes used cannon and mounted guns to limit the daytime movement of the raiders along the main road, and to harass their encampments. The tribesmen kept many of their trucks

parked in the compound adjoining the hospital and pharmacy, and on the playing field of the college next door. Some of these were used as mobile ammunition stores. As the Indian operation gathered pace, the mission also faced dive-bombing raids by Tempests. 'We had grown quite used to two daily visits by the Indian Air Force at 11 in the morning and five in the evening, and the rattle of machine guns and cannon overhead,' Father Shanks wrote. 'But bombing was quite a different matter. I knew it would come as soon as the tribes started to camp in the hospital precincts and took their positions all around our ward to shoot at diving aircraft, and told them so in the most fluent Urdu I remember using these ten years; pointing that they were using the Red Cross on our roof as a cloak for themselves, and begging them to consider the danger to women and children.' Sydney Smith recounted how those trapped in the mission had done their best to ward off the bombing raids:

> We made great red crosses with mattresses and dyed surgical gauze. Father Shanks stormed in to the tribal officers and ordered them to get out or move us.
>
> They did neither, and the raids got worse. Each raider was shot at wildly with every weapon in the town and the air sang with bullets.
>
> Through every raid the nuns sat up in the centre ward nursing the children, and their calm, unfrightened faces were like a blessing on us.
>
> On the eighth day a dive-bomber shattered the ward next to us, and the day after, as Father Shanks led us in digging the air-raid shelter near the grave under the apple trees, explosive cannon shells hit it again.[15]

The trench was only used twice during air raids, being then commandeered by the tribesmen for use as a firing position against attacking aircraft. The hauling of mattresses onto the roof of the ward to form a red cross—they were taken down every evening to be slept upon—appeared to have some benefit, for their part of the mission was never hit. The aerial attacks didn't cause any casualties among those trapped in the baby ward, but they came to be almost as feared as the night-time silhouettes at the windows.

As the stalemate dragged on, the inmates of the mission developed a routine to help maintain morale and pass time. Every morning, Father Shanks would lead his flock in community singing, at least for those who knew the words of such wartime British favourites as 'It's a Long

Way to Tipperary' and 'Lily of Laguna'. One of the older nuns tended to her pet rabbits, which had been fortunate to escape the cooking pot. Father Shanks sought to maintain the semblance of devotional activity, even though his clerical robes and sacred vessels had been looted. A daily rosary was recited, and in the evening a blessing was delivered. In the second week of captivity, 'someone made a terrific discovery, some of the sacred particles had been overlooked by the Pathans. A feverish search was made in the convent—the compounds were fortunately quiet that day—for anything that would serve as vestments. A sizeable piece of white silk was found, some braid. Vestment for a service were found, [a] few scraps of cloth would suffice, hosts were hurriedly made. On the 11th morning I had the happiness of saying mass for our safe evacuation, at the main door of the ward, on the kitchen table, as the first grey crept into the eastern sky. It seemed that God had waited for the psychological moment; as we were saying the last of the prayers after mass, a knock came at the door, the convoy had arrived.'[16]

Indeed, two convoys arrived intent on evacuating the mission. One was led by Mumtaz 'Tazi' Shahnawaz, a writer and social activist from one of the most politically influential families in Pakistan whose mother was prominent in the ruling Muslim League. Tazi's sister Nasim was married to Brigadier Akbar Khan, the Pakistan army officer who had played a prominent part in devising a military strategy to secure Kashmir. The two sisters based themselves in Murree, a hill town in Pakistan close to its border with Kashmir, to help with relief work among refugees.[17] Tazi Shahnawaz's mission of mercy to Baramulla, presented to the world as a resounding success, did not commend itself to Father Shanks. 'Announcing in clear tones that Ali Jinnah had sent them in the name of the women of Pakistan with one car, one station wagon, one three tonner to evacuate our 72 women and children, she carefully dictated all the dangers through which they had come unscathed, and triumphantly produced emergency supplies for the road back in one tin of baby food, one packet of cream crackers and half a bottle of bad Brandy,' the priest wrote. 'She then proceeded to lecture us for the best part of an hour on the glories of Pakistan and the shocking qualities of the tribal liberation. I saw the lips of several of my companions move in silent prayer: the answer came, an opportune aerial attack, and our brave rescuer disappeared into the last shelter available, under Mrs O'Sullivan's bed.' She eventually tagged along with the larger Pakistan army convoy, which had arrived better equipped for the task.

This more substantial evacuation mission of six trucks had again

been prompted by the Frontier governor, Sir George Cunningham. Pakistan army officers were in charge of the operation. On board to serve as an interpreter was Frank Leeson, a British serviceman who had learnt Pashto while serving as an officer in the locally recruited scouts in the Frontier tribal agency of South Waziristan. He had been involved in trying, with little success, to intercept armed tribesmen who were heading towards Kashmir. Leeson was on leave in Rawalpindi when he met some Pakistani officers in Flashman's hotel, who signed him up for the trip. 'We couldn't get hold of Red Cross flags,' he recalls, 'so the Red Cross was painted on the tarpaulins of the trucks. We went up actually via Abbottabad because the normal road, up through Kohala, was so congested with the tribal lorries that we knew they wouldn't get through easily. We went straight to Baramulla. Oh, it was an absolute state of devastation by this time. Not so much from artillery fire, but from sacking and looting and pillaging. The entire content of shops had been pulled out, all lying in the street. I was very shocked actually because having worked with the Waziri tribesmen, I had quite a high opinion of them. But I knew nothing really of Mahsuds, apart from their bad reputation.' A keen photographer, Frank Leeson had a lasting regret that he didn't take his camera with him to Baramulla, but back in Rawalpindi a few days later he took a powerful portrait of a group of four armed Orakzai tribesmen who had arrived by train and were on their way to the front line in Kashmir, young men looking stern but excited at the prospect of battle.

The evacuation convoy did not set off until after dusk, to minimise the risk of being strafed by the Indian air force. 'Nightfall found us ready & piling into lorries with our bundles,' Father Shanks chronicled:

> We moved off. Past the wreck of the dispensary, with its smashed bottles of expensive medicine, the operating theatre with twisted tables and instruments, the nurses quarters with their mutilated crucifixes and holy pictures, past the college with the cross still standing out triumphantly in the red light of cooking fires; down through the main road thronged with Pathans and into deserted Baramulla's main Bazaar, where not a soul was to be seen. There we were stopped and surrounded and heard that the Sikhs were attacking Baramulla in force that night, and our Major had quite a job to explain our bona fida [sic] to them. At last we were permitted to go on . . . . We left the glow of Baramulla behind us. Several times during the night we were held up by armed bands but our stalwart Major & Captain saw us through, and 7 o'clock in the morning

> found us weary but safe, stretching our legs in the Military Hospital at Abbottabad . . . . Eggs by the bucketful, bread in mounds, & oceans of tea took the edge off our ravenous appetites; everyone of us thought it pleasant to sit and have things done for us for a change.

Not everyone got on board the Pakistan army convoy. Francis Rath missed the rescue party because he had gone back to check if his home was still standing and if its contents were intact—the house was fine, but his possessions had been looted both by the lashkar and by local people. While he eventually made his way to Srinagar, the convoy headed to Abbottabad, arriving on the morning of Friday, 7 November. Britain's High Commission in Pakistan telegraphed the news to London, in what reads almost like a hierarchy of survivors:

> Signal dated 7th November from Defence Ministry Rawalpindi states that convoy ex Baramulla arrived Abbotabad morning 7th bringing following:—(A) three Dykes' children, of whom baby is not expected to live (B) eleven nuns (C) twelve Indian Christian nurses. (D) one lady (group omitted) (E) two priests (F) Sydney Smith of "Express", and (G) number of Anglo-Indians and Indians.[18]

There were eighty-nine evacuees in all. The refugees travelled on to Rawalpindi with a military escort which included two tanks, armoured cars, and two truckloads of soldiers. The Dykes children had been put in the informal care, at the convent, of Lily Boal, a Protestant missionary from Belfast who took refuge at the convent. At Rawalpindi, the baby was admitted to hospital where he quickly gained strength, while the older boys were looked after by Lady Messervy, the wife of Pakistan's commander-in-chief. Arrangements were made to send the boys back to Britain by sea from Karachi, with nurses accompanying, in December.

The day after reaching safety Lily Boal wrote an anguished letter to a missionary colleague in Britain, breaking the news that the head of the Protestant mission at Boniyar in Kashmir, Ron Davies, had been killed—apparently the only European fatality during the lashkar's invasion apart from those at the Baramulla mission. 'There is real war between the Mohammedans and the Hindus,' she wrote. 'The tribesmen came in and killed many people and looted the whole place.'

> I went to the R.C. Hospital in Baramula and the Sister at the gate said you must come in because you are in danger! . . . When I was in

> the Hospital I cannot tell you how I felt. It was like "Hell". The wild men arrived on the 27th and killed 6 people in 15 minutes (before our eyes!!) and two very badly wounded. They stole everything from me but they only showed me their gun and said, don't worry we'll not kill you! It was a strange experience and God has spared me for some reason, but I'm a bundle of nerves!! . . .
>
> We travelled all night and it was *most* difficult to get out. The whole of Kashmir is destroyed; my heart is broken for the missionaries left . . . I want to get home now.[19]

No wonder Sydney Smith's account of the whole ordeal was headlined: 'Ten Days of Terror'.

As soon as Smith got to Abbottabad, he did what he'd been unable to do since he left Srinagar—he filed a report to his news desk. On Monday, 10 November—almost two weeks after Smith's last bylined story—the *Daily Express* carried as its front-page banner headline: 'Captive Reporter Sees Bus Invasion'. The paper made the most of their exclusive:

> SYDNEY SMITH, Daily Express Staff Reporter, was captured by invading Moslem tribesmen while out in the battle zone describing the fighting in Kashmir. He was reported missing, believed killed. For ten days, the tribesmen held him prisoner; then a Pakistan Army mission got them to set him free.
>
> Yesterday Smith was back at his job, reporting the Kashmir campaign.

Smith's reporting had lost none of its edge and urgency during his days in captivity. 'What is happening today in Kashmir,' his front-page splash began, 'is of such importance that I must delay the story of my 10-day captivity to give the news of the moment.'

> The first onrush of the invaders has been checked, but I have just watched busloads of howling Pathans, Waziris, Mahsouds, Murmans [sic], and Afghans cross the Kashmir border at Domel to continue the fight from the mountains.
>
> Fifty thousand more Pathans in tribal territory are ready to join them. Pakistan cannot stop them. Sitting with the grey-bearded chieftain, Colonel Shah Pasand Khan, I counted 45 busloads of his burly, glowering warriors—50 to a bus—on their way to do battle with the Indian Dominion troops, mostly Sikhs.

> Everyone has a modern rifle, tied with bright strips of holy cloth, the token of each warrior's oath not to return to his mountain home until the massacres of his Moslem brothers in the Punjab are avenged. Many also carry Sten and Bren guns.
>
> Every evening before his staff officers tear at hunks of half-raw sheep for supper, Colonel Shah Pasand Khan, hands raised palm upwards, chants a prayer to Allah for blessings on their holy war for the extermination of the Sikhs.[20]

Sydney Smith achieved that rare feat for any print reporter of getting his own photo on the front page, along with that of a youthful Father Shanks, his 'teddy boy' quiff looking out of place with the clerical dog collar.

The following day the *Daily Express* gave over almost all its second page to what it trumpeted as 'the year's most exciting story'. Smith's detailed account of the attack on Baramulla, and of the 'humour, courage and faith' with which those trapped in the mission faced their ordeal, was picked up and recycled by newspapers in India and elsewhere. It was a classic story of British bravery in adversity, which also succeeded in giving succinct word portraits of both local refugees and of some of the attackers. It implicitly harked back to what many of its readers would have recognised as the Dunkirk spirit, or the camaraderie of London's wartime 'blitz'. 'As we packed to go,' Smith's article concluded, 'Sister Priscilla, smiling and blinking away the first suspicion of tears, turned to Father Shanks and the other nuns and said in her clipped Italian English: "You know, father, I am sorry it is over. We have been very happy in these ten days."'[21]

By the time Sydney Smith's articles had appeared in the *Daily Express*, the Indian army had taken control of Baramulla. Brigadier L.P. 'Bogey' Sen recorded that his infantry brigade captured Baramulla 'without firing a shot' on 8 November—twenty-four hours after the evacuees from the mission had reached the safety of Abbottabad in Pakistan. 'The sight that greeted us in Baramula is one that no period of time can erase from the memory. It was completely deserted, as silent as a tomb, with not even a whimpering pie dog. Everywhere one looked, whether it was a house or a shop or a shed, there were signs of pillage, arson or wanton destruction. The well equipped Mission Hospital, the most modern in the Valley, looked as if it had been hit by a tornado. Nor had the Mission Church escaped the wrath of the savages.'[22]

The authority of Sen's recollections is diminished by the episode he then recounted of the mission's dog, a cocker spaniel, emerging from hiding, and leading troops to where the bodies of 'his mistress and her

companions had been dumped'. Sen wrote of how the Indian lieutenant who followed the spaniel, 'tough soldier that he was, was overcome by the sight and wept unrestrainedly'. There was indeed a spaniel found at the mission, Blackie, which apparently belonged not to the nuns but to the Dykes family. But there was no mound of bodies of nuns, or others from the mission. All the dead had been buried eleven days earlier. A news photographer who accompanied Brigadier Sen into Baramulla, P.N. Sharma, also made reference to scenes of devastation in the hospital and grounds.[23] It is possible that the tribesmen, as they pulled out of Baramulla just a day or so after the evacuation of the survivors from the mission, carried out more killings, but it is also unmistakeable that the accounts of both Sen and of Sharma were in part intended to damn the invaders and at times exaggerated their barbarity.

In the wake of the Indian army, a small group of Indian and foreign correspondents were taken into Baramulla. Margaret Parton of the *Herald Tribune* confirmed that Indian forces had taken the town without a fight. She pieced together the story from 'terrorized residents'. On the evening of 7 November, she reported, the raiders began to pour back into Baramulla from the direction of Srinagar. The tribesmen shouted that the Indian army was pursuing them in armoured vehicles 'and threw themselves into buses and horse-drawn carriages and set off in panic for the border of Pakistan'. Parton also heard from the town's residents that 'when the raiders' disciplinary organization, the "special armed constabulary" found itself unable to halt the flight, it also packed up and cleared out'.[24] It was the second hurried exodus from the town in as many weeks.

There is no need to rely only on military memoirs for an account of the welcome townspeople accorded the Indian army. Inayatullah told me that most local people 'were happy' at the advent of Indian forces 'in the sense that they were able to come back to their homes'. *The Times* correspondent—presumably Eric Britter—visited Baramulla on the morning of 9 November, a day after Indian troops entered the town. 'All the Baramula residents seemed delighted to welcome the Indian troops,' he reported, 'and spoke with great feeling of the tyranny exercised by the raiders during their 10-day occupation of the town.'[25] He also reflected on the strategic importance of India's capture of Baramulla—'a major success' and perhaps 'the turning point' of the fighting. 'It means that within a fortnight of the arrival of the first airborne troops here the Indian Army has effectively disposed of the threat to the capital city and has virtually cleared the central Vale of Kashmir of enemy.'

The most influential of the eyewitness accounts of foreign correspondents brought in to inspect the ruins of Baramulla was that of Robert Trumbull, which appeared on the front page of the *New York Times* on 11 November. It was quoted in the *White Paper* published by the Indian government the following spring, and has kept cropping up in accounts of the tribal raid and its aftermath ever since:

> This quiet city in the beautiful Kashmir Valley was left smoking, desolate and full of horrible memories by invading frontier tribesmen who held a thirteen-day saturnalia of looting, raping and killing here.
>
> The city had been stripped of its wealth and young women before the tribesmen fled in terror at midnight Friday [7 November] before the advancing Indian Army. . . .
>
> Hardly a single article of value or usefulness was left in Baramula today. The residents said they counted 280 trucks laden with loot and captive women leaving the town in the direction of the Pakistan frontier.[26]

The *Times of India* correspondent, who probably visited the town along with Trumbull, described Baramulla lyrically as 'resembling an orchard after a visitation by a swarm of locusts. After the fashion of Mohamed of Ghazni and his hordes, the tribal raiders had sacked the town, looted and burnt property and killed inhabitants who came their way.'[27] The report, along with most others, included an eyewitness account of the devastation at the mission. 'The furniture and the pews in the chapel had been smashed up, and the images obscenely desecrated.' He also described how the posse of reporters had entered Baramulla in a convoy headed by India's commander of its forces in Kashmir, Major General Kulwant Singh, and by Sheikh Abdullah's deputy, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. 'As we marched behind the General and the National Conference leader to the market place of the town, the road was lined with cheering crowds of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, men, women and children cheering and sobbing. Many of them rushed in to embrace us with tears trickling down the cheeks and told us [of] the days of horror they had spent in the town.'

A day or two after Indian troops entered Baramulla, P.N. Jalali and colleagues in the national militia travelled to the town. 'It was desolate, half-burnt,' he told me. They came across women who had been held by the tribesmen in a police station. 'It was stinking. They had raped them.

Then after the rape they would slit their bodies. Pandit women. Some of them were quite young girls. But almost dying. We were able to rescue them, take them to Srinagar.' He also visited the convent hospital, a 'grim, horrifying sight'. A few days later, Major Cranston came to inspect the site.

> The Convent buildings and hospital and chapel had been completely wrecked inside. All the furniture was pulled about, books had been pulled out of their racks and largely torn up, including a very good library in the Convent itself. All articles of value had been looted and every single piece of cloth whether clothing, curtains, rugs, dhurries, bed sheet, covers of chairs, mattresses and any other form of cloth, had been removed, as also articles like crockery and silver. The outside of the buildings had not been damaged apart from windows being smashed and only one small building had been set on fire. In the Church the destruction and desecration of the altar, statues, crucifixes, books and furniture, was most deliberate. It was obvious that this had not been done in the first hurried search for loot but was a deliberate policy carried out over a period of time . . . . In the hospital the furniture had been wrecked and the extremely fine stock of medicine had been largely destroyed.[28]

The British high commissioner in Karachi wrote to Pakistan's prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, urging him to ensure that the murderers of Colonel and Mrs Dykes and the others killed at the mission be found and punished. The prime minister replied that 'the incidents took place in non-Pakistan territory and the Pakistan Government cannot assume any responsibility in respect of them'.[29]

India's leaders came to Baramulla, to reassure its residents and to celebrate the success of their army. On 12 November, four days after its capture, Nehru visited the town, witnessed the devastation at the convent and hospital—'nothing is left in tact except the flowers,' he commented—and walked round some of the looted localities. He also addressed a rapidly assembled gathering at the town's Idgah or prayer ground. 'You have had a unique experience,' the *Hindustan Times* reported him as saying. 'You have had a taste of what Pakistan means. You have known what destruction and slavery means.' Sheikh Abdullah told the same meeting that 'No one had besmirched the name of Islam to such an extent as the raiders from Pakistan.' The Kashmir leader also said—in a pledge that remains unfulfilled—that Indian forces would remain in Kashmir only until the

raiders had been pushed out, and after that the state would organise its own military protection.[30]

From Baramulla, Indian troops carried on up the Valley road in pursuit of the retreating tribesmen. They advanced quickly, but never got to the other side of the Jhelum gorge. Baramulla, once a staging post on a busy highway, became a dead-end town, the last settlement of any size along a road that no longer led anywhere. The logs could no longer be floated down the Jhelum river. The orchards could no longer serve the old markets in what had become the Pakistan province of Punjab. Many of the men and women in religious orders evacuated from the Baramulla mission eventually returned to Kashmir. St Joseph's College reopened, in a modest fashion, early in 1948—though not at first on its earlier site, which had been taken over by the Indian army. The reopening of the convent and hospital also had to wait until the army had vacated the buildings, but in March 1949 the Franciscan nuns moved back into the mission. Among those who returned to St Joseph's were several survivors of the raid, including the Italians Sister Priscilla and Sister Emilia. The nuns have been there ever since.

{10}

War

The Kashmiri separatist movement has been distinctly lacking in political heavyweights. Abdul Ghani Lone was a substantial politician. He was a mainstream political figure, a one-time member of India's Congress party who in the 1970s served as a minister in the Jammu and Kashmir state government. Then the changing currents of Kashmiri politics, compounded by his disaffection with rigged elections and Delhi's perpetual interference, prompted him to embrace the separatist movement. His party, the People's Conference, although it had its armed wing and its links with the insurgency (and, according to Indian intelligence, with Pakistan's intelligence agency), was never in the hardline pro-Pakistan lobby. He was a moderate within the main separatist alliance, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, which he helped to found—a seasoned, articulate representative of the Kashmiri cause who understood the purpose of conventional politics and the limits of armed struggle.

In October 1993, on one of my first reporting visits to Srinagar, I looked on as Abdul Ghani Lone was beaten up and arrested by members of India's Border Security Force for attempting to lead a demonstration. It was a time of tension in the Kashmir Valley. Armed separatists had taken refuge in Kashmir's most revered Islamic shrine, at Hazratbal on the outskirts of Srinagar. Indian troops were besieging them. The security forces were on edge, and the mood in the Kashmir capital was volatile. I was shocked as much by the audacity of the troops in assaulting a prominent political figure in front of the TV cameras (there was a clumsy attempt to suppress the footage) as by the violence itself. A group of reporters later harangued the Sikh commanding officer and asked to see the arrested politicians and to assess whether they had been badly hurt. He laughed off the demand, saying they were all inside enjoying a cup of tea.

Lone wasn't released from detention for a year. He told me much later that after his arrest, the BSF soldiers, far from offering him tea, carried

out a brutal attack. 'They ruthlessly beat me. I was left half dead.'[1] He also showed me round his massively fortified house in Srinagar, boxed in by a high fence and security grilles. It wasn't sufficient protection. There had been a series of grenade attacks, and a massive car bomb explosion. He pointed out cracks in the walls and floors caused by the blasts. The local police, he said, had told him the name of those responsible. They had mentioned an army officer working with what were termed 'renegades', young Kashmiris who had become armed militants and then had been cajoled or coerced by the Indian authorities into fighting their old comrades. Eventually, the gunmen got Abdul Ghani Lone. He was assassinated at a public meeting in Srinagar. But not by the army or their 'renegade' allies. He was shot by armed separatists.[2]

It is difficult to pinpoint the reason for an assassination, especially when no organisation has claimed responsibility. Lone was probably a target because he was perceived to be edging towards open dialogue with the Indian authorities and putting up candidates at elections. His party, a key constituent of the separatist movement, was teetering on the brink of re-engaging with mainstream politics. It was also perhaps a response to Lone's strongly expressed criticism of the 'guest' militants. These outsiders who had come to Kashmir to fight in a jihad were, by the time of Lone's death, probably more numerous than Valley-born insurgents.

It's something of an irony that when he spoke to me about the inception of the Kashmir crisis in 1947, Abdul Ghani Lone was full of respect for those men from outside the Kashmir Valley who had taken to arms in the name of Islam and of Pakistan. Lone told me he was brought up in a village near Kupwara on the north-west fringes of the Kashmir Valley—an area now just on India's side of the line of control. He recalled that he was about eleven years old at the time of the lashkar's invasion, though if the obituaries are to be believed he was well into his teenage years in 1947. Memories made public, particularly of public figures, are often coloured by their political profile. Lone's memory of the mood in his village was certainly unambiguous. 'People at that time were out and out for Pakistan,' he declared emphatically. 'They were saying at that time that the maharaja has run away, he has left for Jammu. And people were very much opposing him, because he had joined the state with India. Nobody wanted India.' He made the point that in his area, Pakistan was close at hand and was where locals would often head for work, while Jammu seemed a tremendous distance away and Delhi was even more remote.

The raiders had not reached his district during the initial invasion, Lone recalled. And those who entered his home village in a second wave

of operations early in 1948 were, he insisted, not tribesmen. They were from other parts of the former princely state, though from outside the Valley and not Kashmiri-speaking. 'Local people were very much receptive to them, very much joyful. And they welcomed them. People came out of their houses and welcomed them.' They controlled the village and surrounding area for about six months—he recalled—but in or around June 1948, the Indian army forced them out. 'I was a small boy, but when a contingent of the mujahideen had to retreat, and they were going from my village, people—more particularly womenfolk—they were crying. They were weeping—that Indian army is going to take us over. The Indian airplanes came and dropped a bomb in an adjacent village, and there was some firing, strafing also.'

In the wake of the Indian troops' advance, Sheikh Abdullah visited the Kupwara area. Lone remembered him as a popular figure with considerable support. 'I was one of the students playing in the band. [Sheikh Abdullah] made a small speech there—in Kashmiri. At that time he was speaking against the mujahideen. I was confused—why should he speak against them? In the heart of hearts, they were not liking Sheikh Abdullah criticising the mujahideen. At that time, people had no hatred for the mujahideen.' That was the first time Lone saw Sheikh Abdullah. They became political sparring partners. Abdul Ghani Lone was imprisoned several times. That experience, and the vantage point of his political loyalties, was bound to spill over into his narrative of events in 1947–48. But his account suggests that at least in some parts of the Kashmir Valley, Indian troops were seen from the start as an occupying force.

In Srinagar, where most residents welcomed Indian soldiers as saviours from a rampaging tribal army, there were undertows of tension. An incident early in the Indian military operation appears to have influenced a hardening of feeling among some Kashmiris towards the troops. The newspaper editor Sofi Ghulam Mohammad shared keen memories of the change of mood. The raiders were viewed by most people, certainly in Srinagar, as invaders, not liberators, he told me—and he repeated slogans in Urdu that echoed through the streets of the Kashmiri capital as Sheikh Abdullah led a popular movement to stall the attackers: 'You invaders beware, we Kashmiris are ready to fight you', 'Long live Sher-e-Kashmir [Lion of Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah]' and 'Long live Hindu–Sikh–Muslim unity'. He recalled the reception accorded to the Indian army when it was deployed in Srinagar. 'When they entered the city, there were cheers. They were garlanded. Most of them were Sikhs, Patiala Sikhs from Punjab.

National Conference people and the general people thought they have come here to save us, to save our property and save our lives.'

The atmosphere changed when Indian troops became entangled in a clash with a group of National Conference volunteers. One of Sofi Ghulam Mohammad's friends was among those killed:

> The mood of the people changed very immediately against the Indians. These Sikhs from the Punjab, they killed Kashmiris without any provocation. The dead bodies were detected by dogs and local people. Then there were slogans against India and in favour of Pakistan. The mood of the people changed only in a couple of days. I remember it very vividly. It's a damn fact. . . .
>
> They killed without provocation Kashmiri people who were guiding them. They were deputed by the National Conference to guide the Indian army, to show them the places that the invaders are. My colleague of my age, he was also killed by the Indian army at that time—very young boy.

Brigadier 'Bogey' Sen, one of the key Indian army officers repulsing the raiders, has acknowledged that specially selected National Conference volunteers conducted 'reconnaissance missions many of which were very dangerous, [and] had brought in a great deal of information relating to the movement of the tribesmen'. He dated the clash with the volunteers to the night of 5 November—a time when the battle for control of the Valley remained undecided. A volunteer patrol returning from an outlying part of Srinagar was challenged by Sikh troops. Rather than responding, the volunteers ran away. The sentry opened fire, Sen recorded—in what is likely to be simply one side of the story. The following morning the bodies of two men were recovered from the road, and quietly buried by Indian troops in a trench. A furious Sheikh Abdullah summoned Brigadier Sen for an explanation. The Sikh troops were hurriedly redeployed away from that part of Srinagar. But aggrieved local residents disinterred the two bodies and carried them in procession through the main roads of the city. It was 'a most explosive situation,' Sen recounted.[3] P.N. Jalali's recollection is that about seven of his fellow volunteers were killed, and their bodies were carried in procession to the National Conference headquarters before the demonstrators were persuaded to hand them over for burial. The incident went largely unreported in the Indian press, though a few days later the *Times of India* commented tartly that

'irresponsible, unruly conduct on the part of a few of the Indian soldiers does considerable harm to the common cause and military gains are merely jeopardised by political losses'.[4]

If Brigadier Sen got the date right, then the clash with Sheikh Abdullah's supporters came before the showdown at Shalateng that precipitated the flight of the raiders, and several days ahead of the Indian army's capture of Baramulla. In the ensuing battle for the hearts and minds of Kashmiris, the Indian army sought to remind the local population of the fate that had so nearly befallen them. Captured tribesmen were paraded and exhibited, partly as objects of curiosity but more to invoke Kashmiri gratitude for the Indian army in keeping such unkempt invaders at bay. Sofi Ghulam Mohammad recalled heading to the centre of Srinagar to catch a glimpse of the raiders. 'When they were captured, they were brought to Srinagar, in Lal Chowk. Five or six invaders belonging to Peshawar. Thousands of people went to see them. I have seen them. They were handcuffed, four or five invaders. They were tribal, bearded, having those loose clothes—like Pathans, rough type of Pathans.'

The sight was etched in the memory of Srinagar residents who had lived through the crisis, especially those non-Muslims who had most to fear from the raiders. D.N. Kaul was then a police officer in the city:

> I remember very vividly when two of these raiders were captured in Baramulla and brought in handcuffs to Srinagar. So, lots of people gathered. Two- or three-hundred in that Lal Chowk. And they were mounted on top of the roof of a truck, and somebody questioned them then. 'Why did you have the bravado and guts to come here,' he said. 'No, we were told that the territory is ours and the loot is yours . . . We were told: you conquer this territory—the loot, whatever you gain [as] loot, is yours, but we are interested in the territory part of it.'

Kaul was clear that the raiders were conquering at the behest of Pakistan. Harshi Anand, then a fourteen-year-old schoolgirl, was also among the crowds in the centre of Srinagar. 'Yes, yes, I saw them,' she told me. 'When [the] Indian army came, they captured them, three or four, and they brought them to Lal Chowk. [A] mob gathered there, and they were throwing chappals [sandals] and they were abusing them. Those people, they were really looking like brutes—very ferocious looking. They were also very defiant. They were just roped and they were standing there. [I

thought] that these are brutes and very bad people.' And the arousing of that sort of sentiment was no doubt the purpose of the exercise.

A few captured raiders were also put on display to inform and entertain visiting political leaders and reporters. Sat Paul Sahni, then a raw young journalist, covered Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the Kashmir Valley a few days after Indian troops took control of Baramulla. 'The Prime Minister was invited into a tent,' he recalled, 'where three of the lashkar individuals, soldiers you might call them or individuals—and they were there. And they were all Pathans, Afridis. We met them. We talked to them. And they said we didn't know why we were here, but we were asked to go for a jihad, that there were atrocities being committed on Muslims in Kashmir, so we were asked to go and liberate them.' It may have been the same bunch of prisoners that the reporter Margaret Parton of the *Herald Tribune* came across in Baramulla, again just a few days after the raiders retreated from the town. 'We saw some of them in Baramula yesterday,' she wrote in a letter to her mother, 'and with the sight went any lingering thoughts I might have had that a tribal raider was a romantic figure.'

> There were four prisoners who had been left behind in the flight from Kashmir and who had been captured by Indian troops. Never have I seen such disgusting, grotesque figures: one of them, a hulking giant with a filthy grey beard through which straggled one protruding yellow tooth, wore blue checked plus fours, kahki [sic] puttees, a blue RAF jacket, and torn sandals. An unclosed knife-wound lashed across his right eye and part of his cheek, and the blood had dried without any attempt to wash it away. Then there was a little gnome about five feet high and 80 years old, who cackled; a middleaged tribesmen [sic] in a bloodstained burnoose, with the flashing eyes of the zealot; and a half-naked monkey-man in a string of red and blue beads who claimed to be a local 'faquir'.[5]

Margaret Parton offered her mother a theory about why the tribesmen's invasion failed—because of the indiscipline of those members of the lashkar intent on loot. So 'the buses which were to sweep them into Srinagar on Id day . . . were commande[e]red instead by the looting group, and loaded with the stolen goods of the poor Kashmiris, sent off in the opposite direction'. But for this, Parton asserted, the invaders 'might have made it, and having seized the capital city, claimed Kashmir

for Pakistan. But by the time their buses came back and the looters reassembled into something like an army, enough Indian troops had arrived to stop them cold.' She added, somewhat prophetically: 'I think they'll try again—but I don't know when.'

Snippets of information from the interrogation of captured tribesmen and their sympathisers were passed on to the Indian press, and recycled in subsequent Indian official documents.[6] They can hardly be deemed reliable, because prisoners would have been tempted to tell their captors what they thought they wanted to hear, and in any event the Indian authorities were hardly likely to make public any information that didn't suit their purpose. Much of their tone was about the connivance of the leaders of the invasion in looting and rape, and the involvement in the operation of the Pakistani authorities and their army and police officers.

Colonel Harbakhsh Singh was involved in mopping-up operations after the raiders' retreat. 'They ran like hell out of the Valley,' he told me. 'Once they were defeated, they ran.' The advancing Indian troops captured the raiders' vehicles, their suitcases and kit bags, even letters and personal documents—containing, Harbakhsh Singh insisted, evidence of the involvement of officers in the newly created Pakistan army. 'Whoever we caught, they said: leave certificate, we are on leave. Pakistanis would say: we're spending our holidays here in Kashmir, we've come to spend our holidays.' Decades later, Harbakhsh Singh still chortled at the memory of Pakistan army officers in civilian clothes coming to fight in Kashmir during their holidays. Unlikely as this may seem, a scheme to give leave to any Pakistani officers deployed to assist the invaders was one of the points agreed on at the Pakistan leadership's crisis conference on Kashmir two days after the start of the Indian airlift.

Sheikh Abdullah played the raiders card to seek to entrench his political dominance. 'These lovers of Pakistan dishonoured even the Holy Quoran and desecrated our mosques which they turned into brothels to satisfy their animal lust with abducted women,' he declared just ten days after Indian troops entered Baramulla.

> In the name of every Kashmiri I ask the Pir of Manki Sharif to search his conscience as the head of the invaders. We have beaten back these traitors to Islam. God-fearing Kashmiris are reluctant even to touch the bodies of these invaders which are strewn on the battlefields for a burial.
>
> As to traitors to their country, the fifth columnists, people's justice will follow swift and sure.[7]

There was some settling of scores as the invaders were repulsed. A few of the raiders' local supporters joined the retreat. Some alleged sympathisers, among them Baramulla's deputy commissioner Chaudhri Faizullah Khan were arrested. He had, it was said, 'rendered assistance to the invaders', and probably as damning, his brother was the acting president of the National Conference's main rival, the pro-Pakistan Muslim Conference.[8] His statement of evidence was later published by the Indian authorities. 'It is estimated about 5,000 [raiders] were concentrated in Baramula at one time,' he apparently asserted. 'They were mostly tribesmen with a few Punjab Muslims, and well armed and led by Pirs, Pak Army and Frontier Constabulary officers . . . . The local Muslim Conference men joined with the raiders and acted as guides and helped them to collect weapons.' The inhabitants of the town, he declared, had 'suffered terrible hardships . . . . It was a great relief to the inhabitants when the Indian Army re-captured Baramula.'[9]

Gradually, a semblance of normal life returned to the Kashmir Valley. 'Srinagar Gay Again After Days of Panic', ran a headline in the *New York Times* on a story datelined 14 November 1947. The taking of Mahura, a village on the Jhelum river between Baramulla and Uri, allowed staff to return to work at the hydroelectric plant there, and repairs to be made. Little more than a week later, the power supply was partially restored, and Srinagar, or at least parts of the city, had electricity for the first time in almost a month.[10] But the lashkar had been repulsed, not vanquished. When the Indian army captured Uri, nowadays the last town of any consequence on the Indian side of the line of control, it gave up the chase. The retreating invaders were not pursued down the narrowing Jhelum Valley towards Domel and Muzaffarabad. It's a decision that courted intense controversy at the time, and still rankles among Indian veterans of the conflict.

Brigadier Bogey Sen recalled how on 14 November he was summoned back from the front line to Srinagar, and was told by his new commanding officer General Kulwant Singh not to press on down the Valley, but to head south from Uri over a precarious mountain pass to relieve the beleaguered town of Poonch. 'This order took me completely by surprise,' he wrote. 'I explained to Major General Kulwant Singh that I had the enemy on the run, and unless I kept up the pressure he would recover and come back, and instead of our attacking him we would be attacked. I suggested that I be given additional troops and be permitted to continue the advance on the existing axis . . . . This suggestion, however, was not accepted, and I was informed by Major General Kulwant Singh that he

was not interested in moving towards Domel, but was interested in reinforcing Poonch which was under enemy pressure.'[11] Six days later, after a series of stormy exchanges between the force commander and his brigade commander, Brigadier Sen's troops started moving south over the Haji Pir pass, and out of the Kashmir Valley, somewhat encumbered by being mistaken as raiders by a remnant of the Jammu and Kashmir state forces who promptly burnt down an important wooden bridge over a ravine. The abrupt left-turn of the Indian troops took the heat off the retreating tribal forces, and left the strategically situated town of Uri vulnerable to counter-attack.

There were good operational reasons for the Indian army to train its guns in and around Poonch. Its troops faced a more robust adversary in this westerly part of Jammu province, where the insurgency was conducted in large part by local men with considerable military experience (the highly reputed Poonchis, who had served with distinction in the British Indian army) and with substantial local support. There was also a big non-Muslim population in the town of Poonch and adjoining areas, giving rise to fears of heavy loss of civilian lives without forceful military intervention. More than that, advancing on Muzaffarabad and along the Rawalpindi road risked stretching lines of communication, and brought with it a greater risk of full-scale war with Pakistan. The Indian government may well have thought it better, having pushed the raiders out of the Kashmir Valley, to seek to defend what they had secured rather than advance further and risk overextending troops and resources.

Brigadier Sen's supporters have often alleged that the order to divert to Poonch either came from the maharaja, concerned about the well-being of one of his relatives, or from Delhi—and that Jawaharlal Nehru, had political reasons for wanting to restrain his troops as they advanced down the Rawalpindi road. In fact, Nehru appears to have been facing both ways on this issue, expostulating at one meeting of the cabinet defence committee that 'he could not understand why [the] Indian Army had stopped at Uri rather than going on to Domel and even Kohala,' and a few days later telling this same committee that Poonch 'must be held at all costs'.[12] The brigadier's detractors, foremost among them his then deputy Harbakhsh Singh, have accused Sen of 'military incompetence', suggesting that if he had not paused at Uri but pressed on along the Jhelum, 'the Raiders would not have got an opportunity to rally round as they did. Nor would the regular Pakistani army have been able to cross the river [at Domel]. In fact we would not have had a Kashmir problem at all!'[13] There's a touch of bombast in such assertions. Yet whatever the reason,

the failure of Indian troops to continue the advance down the Jhelum Valley allowed the remnants of the retreating lashkar to regroup, re-equip themselves, and return to the battle.

The account of Akbar Khan, one of the Pakistani architects of the invasion of Kashmir, of his role in restoring a semblance of morale and organisation to a disintegrating tribal army was no doubt self-serving, but the raiders certainly managed to raise their standard again and proved to be a considerable adversary for the Indian army. Akbar Khan had travelled back to Rawalpindi at the end of October in an unsuccessful effort to persuade the authorities to provide armoured cars to the lashkar. By the time he was ready to head once more towards Kashmir, the raiders had staged, in his words, 'a total disappearance'. Pakistan's army still would not openly intervene—*Dawn* was reporting Pakistan ministry of defence statements insisting that there was 'absolutely no truth' in reports that Pakistan army officers were directing operations in Kashmir—'yet the show was to go on at all costs'.[14] At about the same time, Khurshid Anwar, the nearest the lashkar had to a commander, was injured in the leg by a bomb splinter somewhere near Uri—he said this was on 10 November, two days after Indian troops entered Baramulla—and was evacuated to Abbottabad. In hospital in Karachi the following month, he told the Muslim League newspaper that 'Colonel Akbar' had taken over command.[15]

Akbar Khan, by his own account, helped the remnants of the raiders stage a fighting withdrawal beyond Uri. Initially, his endeavours to infuse discipline and purpose in the retreating and demoralised ranks of the tribal forces met with little success. Khan, a Pathan, discovered his own elder brother among the raiders at Uri, but still couldn't persuade the retreating lashkar to stay and fight. 'My mission had ended in complete failure,' he lamented. But a few days later, about 13 November, he managed to gather a force at Chakothi, fifteen miles beyond Uri—and nowadays the last settlement on Pakistan's side of the line of control—and over the following days, reinforcements arrived. Some tribesmen 'wanted a chance to make good', and by the end of November there was a fighting force of some strength. A British diplomat C.B. Duke visited Abbottabad at about this time and found about 2,000 armed men there intent on fighting in Kashmir, though he commented that it was 'difficult to get any accurate estimate of the numbers of tribesmen involved . . . as they come and go largely according to their own feelings':

> In Abbottabad the tribesmen were conspicuous with their rifles over their shoulders, girt with bandoliers and lookingly thoroughly

> piratical. But I was given to understand that they are less of a nuisance than they were, as the buildings of the former Government Stud Farm, some 3 miles outside of Abbottabad itself, had been made over to them for use as a transit camp, and from there they go up the road in the evenings so as to move in Kashmir itself under the cover of darkness to avoid the attentions of Indian aircraft, which the tribesmen said did damage, but principally to the Kashmiris themselves in their villages and fields.
>
> I drove out to Garhi Habibullah, the last village on this side of the Kashmir border . . . . In spite of general sympathy with the object of helping the Muslims of Kashmir, all those who had come into contact with the tribesmen were thoroughly sick of them, though not less frightened of them, calling them wolves—rapacious, quarrelsome and dangerous.[16]

The diplomat reported that Mahsuds were the dominant component of the tribal forces, but that Afridis, Mohmands, Wazirs, migratory Afghan tribes and others were also present.

In early December, Akbar Khan recalled that he was summoned to Rawalpindi to meet Pakistan's prime minister. And with the alleged connivance of Pakistan's British commander-in-chief General Messervy, the raiders were allocated a million rounds of ammunition and the service of twelve volunteer officers from the Pakistan army for three weeks.[17] At the same time, it seems the Pakistan authorities were restricting the flow of tribal fighters towards Kashmir—one report from Peshawar in late November relayed word that in the previous three weeks, about 7,000 armed tribesmen making for Kashmir had been stopped and turned back.[18] Whatever support was being provided to the lashkar was half-hearted. But the Pakistani leadership was determined to keep alive the issue of Kashmir's status, and to avoid an Indian military advance along the Rawalpindi road. They had little option but surreptitiously to build up the effectiveness of the armed forces already in the field. By doing so, they ensured that as winter set in, Indian troops were unable to extend their control much beyond the town of Uri. That in turn set the parameters for the informal partition of the former princely state.

Indian commanders certainly noticed the new resolve and battle readiness of the lashkar and its allies. 'During the first week of December,' wrote Brigadier Sen, 'the tactics employed by the enemy underwent a radical change. The battle formations adopted made it obvious that the enemy was composed not solely of tribesmen, but included a percentage

of either regular or irregular troops.'[19] The following week witnessed the most bruising battle for the Indian army to date, on the mountain tracks radiating out from Uri. The First Battalion of the Sikh Regiment was now responsible for that area. On 12 or 13 December, an army contingent seeking to dislodge raiders who were threatening the security of some of the roads and passes found itself hemmed in on three sides. It appeared to have been a well-planned ambush. According to the official Indian account, sixty of its troops were killed and at least as many injured—a grievous blow. The Indian regiment that spearheaded the Kashmir operation lost more men in a matter of hours in that encounter outside Uri than it had in the previous seven weeks of at times heavy fighting.[20] The First Sikhs were promptly pulled back to Srinagar and put on garrison duty, and they spent the next six weeks recuperating, reorganising and undergoing training.

On other fronts, the ebb and flow of the conflict was uneven. Pakistan gained control of Gilgit in the north-west of the former princely state without much of a fight. The maharaja's rule over this remote area had only recently been restored after a period of lease to British India (this was 'great game' territory, close to the Soviet Union, China and Afghanistan, sparsely populated but seen as of strategic importance), and the Dogra monarchy's claim to and grip on the region was weak. It was a young Scottish officer who had recently been transferred into the service of the maharaja, Willie Brown, who took it upon himself to deliver Gilgit to Pakistan, with the support, or at least the acquiescence, of the troops he commanded, the Gilgit Scouts. There was certainly little sign of local enthusiasm for Indian rule, and every indication of mounting unrest. Brown organised a quiet coup, placing the maharaja's governor under house arrest, and sidestepping local sentiment in favour of self-rule. 'Who is Major William Brown?' a British official enquired with some exasperation. By then, the Pakistan flag was flying in Muslim-majority Gilgit and its fate was sealed. Colonel Aslam Khan, one of Khurshid Anwar's officers during the lashkar's initial venture into Kashmir and a veteran of the Baramulla debacle, took over command of the Gilgit Scouts in January 1948. In the ensuing months, the Gilgit Scouts, after quite a tussle, also managed to bring neighbouring Baltistan into Pakistan's orbit, and came close to prising Ladakh away from Indian rule.[21]

In addition to the conflict about Kashmir's status, Jammu province in the south-west of the former princely state had witnessed acute communal tension, heavy loss of life and huge movement of refugees. The extent of the killing in Jammu province is difficult to ascertain.

There were at the time and afterwards allegations of massacres of Muslims in and around Jammu by the maharaja's forces and by armed Hindu and Sikh groups. These reports greatly inflamed tension, and encouraged the Pathan tribesmen and others in Pakistan to take up arms to save Muslim lives. The figure has been cited of 200,000 casualties in Jammu province in the closing months of 1947. An exhaustive study of census and other data has concluded that it is 'impossible to determine' if there was a massacre of Muslims.[22] Thousands of people were certainly killed on both sides, and there is evidence that a large number of Muslims died in targeted attacks, particularly in early November just as fighting was taking place further north for control of Srinagar. The profound anxiety this caused in Jammu province, as well as the impact of the carnage in Punjab, added to the hundreds of thousands of refugees of all three communities who moved across the new international border near Jammu or traversed the malleable front line of the fighting.[23]

On the battlefront in Jammu province, there was no Gilgit-style walkover for the Pakistan forces. The longevity of the battle in the more southerly parts of the war front, and the greater relative preponderance there of military veterans (either of the British Indian army or of the Kashmir state forces or indeed of the Japan-aligned Indian National Army of Subash Chandra Bose) as opposed to tribal forces, allowed the introduction of more conventional military organisation. Pakistan's Azad Kashmir Regiment has claimed 'the unique distinction of being the only Regiment of the Pakistan Army that raised itself in the battlefield to fight for the freedom of its homeland'.[24] It traces its history back to the first shots fired in the Poonch rebellion. Its political line of command was far from clear—notionally the provisional Azad Kashmir government was in charge, but not in any real sense.

Regimental histories are not the best source of unimpeachable information. The history of the Azad Kashmir Regiment is perhaps overstating the fact to suggest there was a command structure in each sector in place by early November 1947. Indeed, the acidic Akbar Khan related how in the Poonch area there were two rival commanders, who kept leapfrogging each other in giving themselves ever more exalted military ranks. In this sector of the front, however, local opinion rallied strongly behind the Pakistan forces. Some of the towns closest to Pakistan Punjab such as Mirpur were quickly taken over by the Azad Kashmir forces, as was much of the countryside around Poonch. But after that initial claiming of territory, it was a keenly fought battle for land and for control of the few towns of any size.

In the southern front, stretching from Mirpur north to Poonch and beyond, there was at least the makings of a centralised military command. At the helm of the pro-Pakistan forces was Brigadier Muhammed Zaman Kiani, who had been involved in planning for the Kashmir operation from an early stage. He was a veteran of the Indian National Army, and had apparently seen active service alongside the Japanese in north-east India during the Second World War. The regimental history names another INA veteran, Colonel Habib-ur-Rehman, as his initial deputy. Of the eleven other sector and senior commanders listed in this account, five were identified as INA veterans, and two others as former officers in the Jammu and Kashmir state forces—the remainder (and indeed most of the INA fighters before they changed side) had probably served with the pre-independence Indian army. The contribution of former INA officers is striking. They provided some of the military acumen that was so vital, and which the Pakistan army, still being assembled in the aftermath of Partition, was not permitted to provide, at least not openly.

The somewhat haphazard recruitment of officers of the Azad Kashmir forces was evident in the remarkable story of Russell K. Haight, an American soldier and adventurer who helped lead the raiders on the Poonch and Kotli fronts. He was a twenty-five-year-old US war veteran from New York who spent two months as, by his own account, a 'brigadier general' with the insurgents. It seems that Haight, a former US army sergeant, had been working in Afghanistan for a construction company, suffered an injury, and was in Rawalpindi in November on his way back to the United States when he fell in with leaders of the Azad Kashmir forces. 'I was to be sent back to Denver,' he reminisced many years later, 'but got off the train in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. I met a newspaper man . . . who in turn introduced me to Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim Khan. He offered me a captaincy in the Azad Kashmir forces and I accepted.'[25] When Haight's wife, Doris, back at home in Colorado looking after a one-year-old baby, heard of his bravado, she commented ruefully: 'Russell is impulsive and full of energy . . . . It didn't surprise me when they said he was fighting in India.' Haight's family still has a typed note sent to 'Captain R.K. Haight, (on Field)' at the end of November 1947 from the 'Azad Kashmir Government H.Q. C/O General Post Office Rawalpindi'.[26]

The news reporter that Haight met in Rawalpindi was Sydney Smith of the *Daily Express*, recently arrived in the city after his evacuation from Baramulla and again on the lookout for scoops. He manufactured one from Haight's enlistment in the Azad Kashmir forces, and filed a front-page story from Rawalpindi (Haight's wife was English, which

made the story even better for the *Express*) before the 'ex-commando' had even reached the front line. 'Wearing a ten-gallon cowboy hat, bright blue overalls, and high yellow boots, the first white man to join the invading tribesmen went into action tonight against the Indian Dominion troops in Kashmir,' filed Smith. He even had an excitedly naïve quote from Haight: 'I'm tickled to death to get into this little war. I threw up a road-building job in Afghanistan to show the Kashmiris the Commando fighting we learned in England.'[27]

When Robert Trumbull of the *New York Times* met up with Haight in Lahore a few weeks later, the Stetson had been replaced by an 'eighteen-foot Poonchi turban' and the overalls had made way for a jungle-green uniform with Azad Kashmir insignia in Urdu. But by then Haight's 'little war' was over, and he was heading out of Pakistan in fear of his life. There had been, Haight said, several attempts to kill him, and Trumbull—no doubt getting every last drop of drama out of the story—explained that he sat on the interview for twelve days until he received a coded telegram from Haight that he was about to leave the country. 'He learned how to handle unruly tribesmen—who were interested mainly in loot—by playing upon their vanities and tribal rivalries,' Trumbull reported, 'but he decided to quit when he was unable to obtain either the supplies or the cooperation necessary for the tasks he was asked to do.'

Russell Haight fell foul of various different factions in the conflict, and had to beat a hasty retreat. 'When fighting in Jhelum,' he recalled towards the end of his life, 'we had two workable machine guns we had recovered from a downed Indian Airforce plane. Three Pathan tribesmen tried to take them so we had to kill them. I escaped with a truck and a driver and the two machine guns.' Haight was not well versed in the political sensitivities of the region, but he told Robert Trumbull that the Pakistani authorities had played a critical role in sustaining the military operation.

> Mr Haight said gasoline—a scarce and strictly rationed commodity—was supplied plentifully to the raiders by the Pakistan authorities.
>
> Mr Haight also found Pakistan Army personnel running the Azad Kashmir radio station, relaying messages through their own Pakistan Army receivers, organizing and managing Azad encampments in Pakistan, and supplying uniforms, food, arms and ammunition which, he understood, came from Pakistan Army stores through such subterfuges as the 'loss' of ammunition shipments.

> Although he insisted that the Kashmir fighting broke out in rebellion against atrocities committed upon Moslems by the Hindu Maharajah's Dogra troops, Mr Haight characterized the Azad Kashmir Provisional Government . . . as 'Pakistan puppets'. He also deeply implicated high Pakistan Government officials, notably the Premier of the North-West Frontier Province.[28]

Some of the strength of Haight's testimony is diminished by his insistence on circumstantial evidence that Russia was also supplying weaponry, and that scores of Communists (particularly in the distinctly obscure Kashmir Freedom League, of which he said 'there wasn't an honest-to-God Moslem in the bunch') were actively supporting the raiders. This fitted the increasingly chilly cold war mood much more than it seems to have fitted the facts. It may, however, have helped him get the attention of the US state department, which eventually arranged his passage home.[29] A British diplomat who met 'Brigadier Haight' shortly before he left Pakistan, found him to be 'quite clearly scared . . . while he was prepared for small scale fighting, he had no desire to be mixed up in a larger war'. The diplomat went on to report that Haight 'had taken on night time employment with a small time European crook in a gambling den, and hoped to get enough money to make a secret departure to Karachi and throw himself at the mercies of the USA consul there'.[30]

The British diplomat sought to get Haight to estimate the strength of the lashkar and other Azad Kashmir forces. Haight's 'vaguest guess' was that there were 15,000 tribal fighters in Jammu and Kashmir, with a similar number coming and going and dispersed along the border. 'He also said there were a fair number of Pakistan officers on leave in Kashmir.' It is impossible to reach any authoritative estimate on the size of the armed contingents trying to fend off Indian rule in Kashmir. Sir George Cunningham, from his vantage point of the governor's residence in Peshawar, kept count as best he could. As the threat to Srinagar was at its height, Cunningham estimated that about 7,000 Pathan tribesmen—chiefly, in his view, Mahsuds, Afridis and Mohmands—were involved in the operation.[31] This is probably the most reliable and disinterested figure for the size of the lashkar at its peak, and broadly fits with the independent estimates of two reporters on the spot, Alan Moorehead and Sydney Smith, that the lashkar had a fighting force of about 10,000. But given the constant ebb and flow of the tribal forces, the number who at one time or other fought in Kashmir would, as Russell Haight suggested,

have been substantially higher. Cunningham's estimate appears not to take into account the forces on the southern front, around Poonch, where there were tribal contingents, but probably as great a number of local men and of armed sympathisers from both Punjab and the Frontier Province. The scale of India's military deployment in the former princely state is also difficult to decipher—one knowledgeable military historian has suggested that by mid-November, India had more than 11,000 troops in the Kashmir Valley, and by the following May, was deploying 14,000 troops on the front line and to secure lines of communication.[32] It is likely, in other words, that no side had an overwhelming advantage in terms of numbers deployed—though the Indian troops were certainly better equipped and organised.

In tandem with the fighting for Kashmir, a diplomatic war was being waged by India and Pakistan for control of the Valley. Nehru fired the first substantial salvo, and in so doing directed India's policy along a course which Delhi has spent decades trying to undo. He sought to internationalise the Kashmir issue and made pledges which, as Pakistan has persistently reminded the world, India has not fulfilled.

On Sunday, 2 November 1947—six days after the start of India's military airlift to Kashmir—Nehru broadcast to the nation. 'I want to speak to you tonight about Kashmir,' he began, 'not about the beauty of that famous Valley, but about the horror which it has had to face recently.' He related the background to India's military intervention, and alleged Pakistan's culpability in failing to stop the raiders. He made two clear statements—that India's military presence in Kashmir would not be indefinite, and that Kashmiris would have a referendum to determine their future. 'It must be remembered . . . that the struggle in Kashmir is a struggle of the people of Kashmir under popular leadership against the invader,' he asserted. 'Our troops are there to help in this struggle, and as soon as Kashmir is free from the invader, our troops will have no further necessity to remain there and the fate of Kashmir will be left in the hands of the people of Kashmir.' He then put flesh on the bare bones of Mountbatten's commitment, in accepting Kashmir's accession to India, to allow the people of the princely state to decide on its status when circumstances allowed.

> We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given, and the Maharaja has supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not, and cannot back out of it. We are prepared when peace

> and law and order have been established to have a referendum held under international auspices like the United Nations. We want it to be a fair and just reference to the people, and we shall accept their verdict. I can imagine no fairer and juster offer.
>
> Meanwhile we have given our word to the people of Kashmir to protect them against the invader and we shall keep our pledge.[33]

It was a key statement of Indian policy. 'Plebiscite under U.N. Auspices/Pandit Nehru's Pledge On Kashmir Issue', ran the lead headline in the *Times of India* the next morning. Nehru's words were unambiguous—a commitment to the international community that there would be a referendum held under the auspices of the UN or some other international body. Within a week, Nehru had put a three-point proposal to his Pakistani counterpart: that Pakistan should publicly do its utmost to compel the raiders to withdraw from Kashmir; that India would repeat its intention to pull troops out of Kashmiri soil once the raiders had withdrawn and law and order had been restored; and 'that the Governments of India and Pakistan should make a joint request to U.N.O. [the United Nations Organisation] to undertake a plebiscite in Kashmir at the earliest possible date'. The idea of a referendum to decide on the Partition line had been tried, and worked, elsewhere. There had been popular votes in the North West Frontier Province and in the Sylhet district of Assam in July 1947, both turning out to Pakistan's advantage. And a vote had also been mooted to settle Junagadh's status. None of these polls, of course, had been conducted under UN supervision.

No sooner were Nehru's words uttered than his allies in Kashmir were trying to damp down expectations of an early vote. When Nehru visited Srinagar nine days after his broadcast, Sheikh Abdullah took the opportunity to pour a bucket of cold water over talk of an early plebiscite. 'There may not be a referendum at all after this disaster at Baramula, Uri, Pattan and Muzaffarabad and other places,' he reportedly told journalists over dinner. 'After what happened in these places, the people of Kashmir may not bother about a referendum.' A few days later, his deputy Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad commented that the 'people of Kashmir are more likely to be asked to ratify the provisional decision to accede to India at the general elections than to vote in a referendum to decide the future of the State, in the light of atrocities committed by the raiders.'[34] It's difficult to establish whether this was excited political rhetoric or a reflection of the difficulties of organising a referendum in a troubled region with no history of popular elections, or a sign of lack of confidence that India

could win a vote. Most likely, it was a rather brittle assertion by Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference that, after a matter of days in power, they did not intend to offer to relinquish their much sought after new positions and authority. Pakistan may, in a sense, have unintentionally propelled Sheikh Abdullah to power, but he was not minded to give Pakistan the chance of evicting him from office quite so quickly.

At the same time, Pakistan's leadership, which had initially been unenthusiastic about reference to the United Nations, warmed to the idea of a role for the still new and untested international body. 'We are ready to request U.N.O. . . . to set up an impartial administration of the State till a plebiscite is held,' Pakistan's prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, stated on 16 November, 'and to undertake the plebiscite under its direction and control for the purpose of ascertaining the free and unfettered will of the people of the State on the question of accession.' Pakistan's suggestion that the UN take responsibility for governing the state, in place of Sheikh Abdullah, was not what India had in mind. The tension between the neighbouring dominions had been intensified by India's takeover of the princely state of Junagadh in mid-November. All three disputed states to which Pakistan had an arguable claim—the third was Hyderabad in the south—appeared to be slipping from its grip. Both Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan were at various times unwell during the early weeks of the Kashmir crisis, and plans for a face-to-face meeting in the crucial initial stages of the conflict were not realised. The two prime ministers met twice in the first week of December, at sessions of the joint defence council, but not in an atmosphere conducive to anything other than a repetition of stated views.[35]

On New Year's Day 1948, India formally put the Kashmir issue before the United Nations, complaining of 'the aid which invaders, consisting of nationals of Pakistan and of tribesmen . . . are drawing from Pakistan', and describing this as an 'act of aggression against India'. This was the beginning of a tortuous UN involvement in the Kashmir issue—at least eighteen Security Council resolutions in the following quarter of a century, one of the longest lasting and least successful UN military missions, a lot of hand-wringing and little achievement. From the start, the United Nations served as a forum for putting the Kashmir issue under a magnifying glass. India wanted to focus on what it described as Pakistan's aggression. Pakistan succeeded in broadening the issue to that of the process of accession, the rival claims to Kashmir, and—harking on Mountbatten's and Nehru's public commitments—the need to establish the will of the people of Kashmir (while at the same time blocking off the option of

independence). Sheikh Abdullah was among those who presented India's case to the UN Security Council in the initial debates. The consensus has always been that Pakistan was more effective at this stage in making use of the United Nations as a forum and in arguing its corner.

In January 1948, the United Nations Security Council passed two quick resolutions—numbers 38 and 39, a reminder of just how young and raw the UN was at that time—urging that the two countries do nothing that might 'aggravate' the conflict, and establishing a UN commission. A further resolution in April expanded the size and defined the remit of the commission and proposed measures 'to bring about a cessation of the fighting and to create proper conditions for a free and impartial plebiscite to decide whether the State of Jammu and Kashmir is to accede to India or Pakistan.'[36] The Indian government was deeply unhappy that Pakistan had not been named as the aggressor. Its reference of the Kashmir issue to the UN had not gone as Delhi had planned, and now the focus of international attention was not on Pakistan's complicity in an invasion of what had become Indian territory, but on the strength of the competing claims to Kashmir and how they could be resolved by a referendum. Karachi was also uneasy, because the terms of the resolution appeared to suggest that all Pakistani fighters from outside Kashmir—in other words, most of them—should be required to leave the former princely state. The only Kashmiri leader who could make any real noise about the damping down of any option of independence, Sheikh Abdullah, chose not to—at least, not at this stage.

A five-nation UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) eventually arrived in the region in early July. Josef Korbel was the Czechoslovak member until replaced by his government the following year. Korbel's subsequent account both of the UN's laborious and largely ineffective intervention, and of the underlying crisis, revealed his grave concern over Soviet involvement in Kashmir. It was entitled *Danger in Kashmir*, and the danger he had in mind was Moscow-aligned communism. Writing in the 1950s with the cold war at its height, Korbel gave expression 'to the possibility that Kashmir might eventually become a hub of Communist activities in Southern Asia'. What's more, he saw in the left-leaning National Conference administration in Indian Kashmir, and its leader Sheikh Abdullah ('an opportunist and, worse, a dictator'), indications of communist allegiances. 'Kashmir is on the road to a radical left-wing totalitarian dictatorship,' Korbel declared.[37]

The 'New Kashmir' manifesto that the National Conference had adopted in 1944 gave some credence to concerns about the party's

communist affinities. It had been written mainly by a Punjabi communist B.P.L. Bedi, though it is not clear whether he was acting on behalf of the party or on his own initiative. (One of Bedi's comrades at the time Pran Nath Jalali recalled that there wasn't much writing to be done, as most of the document was lifted from a Soviet publication). In the introduction, Sheikh Abdullah applauded that 'Soviet Russia has demonstrated before our eyes, not merely theoretically but in her actual day to day life and development, that real freedom takes birth only from economic emancipation.' He wanted the same for New Kashmir. Indeed, the manifesto set out proposals which it described as 'in worthy participation of the historic resurgence of the peoples of the East, and the working masses of the world, and in determination to make this our country a dazzling gem upon the snowy bosom of Asia'. Moving from abstract rhetoric to practicalities, the anti-landlord policy of 'land to the tiller' also cast Sheikh Abdullah's party as determinedly socialist. Sheikh Abdullah's precipitate renaming on taking power of the main square in Srinagar as Red Square (Lal Chowk) was pointed to as clinching evidence of Soviet sympathies. In his initial months in power, he relied greatly on Bedi and a handful of left-wing advisers. The small number of communists in Srinagar were active and disproportionately influential within the National Conference, and its trade union and students' movements. There had been a long history to fears of Russian, and then Soviet, involvement in Kashmir.[38] Suffice it to say that however looming and urgent these concerns once seemed of Moscow's ambitions in Kashmir, it never became a hub of communism, and while the National Conference's radicalism saw through the introduction of far-reaching land reform it ebbed markedly over the years.

By the time Josef Korbel and his colleagues on the UN Commission for India and Pakistan embarked on their deliberations, attempts to stop the Kashmir dispute sliding into open war were already too late. Their first stop was Karachi. Jinnah was too ill to meet the commission, and died two months later. The prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, hosted a courtesy call, during which he never mentioned Kashmir. But Pakistan's foreign minister Sir Zafrullah Khan was more forthright, giving the commission's members a three-hour briefing on the background to the Kashmir issue. 'Then came the first bombshell,' Korbel recorded. Zafrullah Khan 'informed the Commission that three Pakistani brigades had been on Kashmir territory since May'. The Pakistan government excused the deployment as an act of self-defence in response to an Indian army offensive.[39] The commission members immediately recognised that 'the

presence of the Pakistani troops in Kashmir made of the situation something far graver and far more disturbing' than had been apparent when they were despatched on their mission.

The Kashmiri winter had seen some sporadic fighting on the edges of the Valley. Indian troops had clawed back control of some strategic points, and had seen off what they regarded as a serious advance by raiders and their allies in the February dead of winter. Indian generals planned for a spring offensive. The aim was to capture Domel, the location of the strategic bridge adjoining the town of Muzaffarabad, and in May troops sought to advance along the Jhelum Valley road, with flanking operations to the south and more forcefully to the north.[40] There was also military activity on the Jammu front, with Indian troops capturing the key town of Rajouri near Poonch in April 1948. The Indian army achieved other successes on both fronts, but their progress was slow, and this was certainly not a hell-for-leather advance towards Pakistan's main population centres. It was sufficiently alarming for Pakistan's armed forces, however, for them to take the step that they had held back from seven months earlier, and deploy units of the Pakistan army to fight Indian troops in Kashmir. The façade of limited political and logistical support for the anti-India forces in Kashmir was dropped, and Pakistan committed key units of its army on the front line. This was war, albeit undeclared.

The call to deploy in Kashmir was issued by the same British officer, General Douglas Gracey—by now Pakistan's commander-in-chief—who the previous October had refused to act on Jinnah's order to mobilise troops and advance into the Kashmir Valley. As early as 20 April 1948, Gracey reported to his government the potential consequences of an Indian army general offensive which he expected to start 'very soon now':

> If Pakistan is not to face another serious refugee problem with about 2,750,000 people uprooted from their homes; if India is not to be allowed to sit on the doorsteps of Pakistan to the rear and on the flank at liberty to enter at its will and pleasure; if the civilian and military morale is not to be affected to a dangerous extent; and if subversive political forces are not to be encouraged and let loose within Pakistan itself, it is imperative that the Indian Army is not allowed to advance beyond the general line Uri-Poonch-Naoshera.[41]

The advice was taken. At the beginning of May, Britain's high commissioner to Pakistan reported back to London that units of the Pakistan army were fighting in Kashmir. The British government managed

to stop this information becoming public. And the UN commission was taken by surprise when the Pakistan government for the first time acknowledged its military intervention in Kashmir two months later.

This escalation of the conflict did not entail the spread of fighting beyond the former princely state. Unlike later wars, the first India–Pakistan war was restricted to one main theatre of operations, in Jammu and Kashmir. And in spite of earlier threats, the British government did not pull out the remaining officers in the Indian and Pakistan armed forces. The order that they should not be involved in the fighting in Kashmir remained in place, but they were not forced to stand down. This was distinctly to Pakistan's advantage. In 1948, there were still an estimated 800 British officers in Pakistan's forces. By contrast, the Indian army had pursued a policy of promoting its nationals, and only 350 British officers remained, almost all serving in advisory or technical posts.[42] The Indian government complained vigorously that British officers, even if not fighting, were assisting and helping to organise Pakistan's war effort. Their representations would have been still more insistent if they had known that a handful of British officers were commanding Pakistani troops in Kashmir.

The regimental newsletters of veterans of the British Indian army, now fallen silent as their members diminish in number, are replete with stories and anecdotes which supplement the official accounts of military deployments. For almost forty years, Lt Col. Patric Emerson was the secretary of the Indian Army Association, and for much of that time published its newsletter. He had served as an officer in the pre-independence Indian army for ten years at the time of Partition, when he opted for Pakistan and served there a further couple of years. In late 1947 and through the following year, he was a battalion commander based at Sialkot, just across the new international border from the Indian city of Jammu. As with almost all British officers, he knew nothing about the plans for the tribesmen's invasion of the princely state, or the support being given to the Azad Kashmir forces. 'I hadn't a clue,' he told me. 'One day, I was told that if I got on my motorbike and went ten miles or so up along the border, I would see some of the Pathans coming back with their loot. So I got on my bike and sat at a respectful distance away, and I could see this long line of Pathans with all sorts of swag over their shoulder, all disappearing into the distance. But that's all I ever saw of it.'

Even when Pakistan deployed its troops in strength in Kashmir, he remained at base. But Patric Emerson's newsletter, and other veterans' publications, have carried accounts of British officers who, rather than

allow the troops they commanded to advance into action without them, followed on and fought for Pakistan in Kashmir. 'I think in most cases it was because their soldiers were going in, and they had always fought with their soldiers—so they would jolly well go with them,' Emerson commented. 'I don't think many people thought very much about what the consequences of Kashmir would be, or what the future of it would be. It's just their men were going in, so I'm going in with them.'

One of these hidden veterans of the conflict, J.H. Harvey-Kelly, ventured twice into Kashmir. On the first occasion, in January 1948, his mission was to find and bring back Pakistani troops under his command who had headed off with an arsenal of weapons and mortars to help the Kashmir operation. The second time around, in the early summer of 1948, he was not restraining his men but leading them from their base in Abbottabad into battle against Indian troops. Harvey-Kelly recalled that he was summoned to the hill town of Murree to meet one of the instigators of Pakistan's Kashmir operation, Akbar Khan.

> Akbar's first question was 'Are you a volunteer?' The puzzlement must have shown on my face, for he went on, 'I shall quite understand if you don't want to go to Kashmir'. I immediately assured him that there was nothing I would like better, and if commanding my battalion in Kashmir meant being a volunteer, I most certainly was one. 'That's fine' he said 'we must give you a code name. How about Iqbal?' I was flattered as Sir Mohammed Iqbal had been a distinguished Punjabi poet . . . . I liked Brigadier Akbar and was amused at his way of speaking, which seemed to me very Irish. He had race horses training in Ireland and his Begum was a well-known political figure.

Harvey-Kelly commanded his troops as they prepared, with eventual success, to capture the strategic location of Pandu, a hill north of the river Jhelum and overlooking Chakothi. His soldiers sported neither regimental badges nor identity discs, for it seems they were deployed before Pakistan had announced that it was sending regular troops to Kashmir. Harvey-Kelly himself wore no uniform and grew a beard 'as there seemed no point in making my presence with the battalion unnecessarily obvious to outside observers'. His plans for taking the position were made more difficult by rivalries among the attacking forces—an escort party bringing his troops reconditioned Lee Enfield rifles was ambushed by Mahsud tribesmen, who took the rifles for their own use. He had no qualms

about taking up arms against soldiers who, a year earlier, had been his colleagues in the pre-independence Indian army. 'I was pitting my professional skill against that of an equally well qualified opponent,' Harvey-Kelly reminisced, 'and our cause was, in my opinion, a worthy one. The fact that India could employ all arms with impunity whereas we only had Azad Kashmiris (not renowned for their fighting qualities), Pathan tribesmen, a few units of regular infantry and a very few guns made the adventure even more of a challenge.' He was eventually, to his dismay, instructed to return to base, leaving his battalion behind. Very few British officers fought with Pakistan forces in Kashmir, but Harvey-Kelly insisted that he was not unique in this regard.[43] At the beginning of 1948, British diplomats in Pakistan reported that six British officers who had just received their discharge had decided to join the Azad Kashmir forces—two of them were reputed to be 'not very desirable'—but they were apparently persuaded to change their minds.[44]

The open conflict between the Indian and Pakistan armies saw officers who had recently been comrades-in-arms fighting against each other, and generals who had been cadets together deploying their troops against old friends. The ripping apart of the undivided Indian army was one of the most painful, and grievance-ridden, aspects of Partition. Pakistan believed, probably with some justice, that India had dragged its feet in the division of resources that accompanied the allocation of soldiers and officers between the two countries. Pakistan certainly faced the greater task in establishing an army. Although the two armed forces shared a common military culture, their trajectory over the following sixty years has been markedly different. Pakistan has seen a succession of military coups and military leaders while Indian troops have never headed out of their barracks with the aim of overthrowing an elected government.

For many veterans of the first India–Pakistan war, the excitement of seeing active service in the cause of their newly independent nation was tempered by the knowledge that they were fighting against friends. Manmohan Khanna, who retired from the Indian army as a general, told me how in 1948 he had sent cigarettes across the front line to an old friend fighting against him. In Pakistan, another veteran who reached high military rank later in his career, Sher Ali Pataudi, told Victoria Schofield that he contacted an old buddy, one of the Indian commanders: 'He said "For God's sake, let's stop." I said: "I can't until I get the orders." We were great friends and we had to fight each other. It was a tragedy.'[45]

The two armies did eventually stop. Pakistan's General Gracey broadly achieved his aim of holding the Indian army at a line from Uri

through Poonch to Naoshera. In other words, Pakistan's army succeeded in resisting an Indian advance west, so protecting the main towns in Pakistan Kashmir, Mirpur and Muzaffarabad, and maintaining a buffer between Indian troops and the Pakistan heartlands. There was quite a lot of fighting, but no side gained a decisive advantage. Pakistani troops made their biggest territorial gains in Baltistan and Ladakh, taking control of the key town of Skardu—though India was able to secure the road route to the Ladakhi capital Leh. Along the Jhelum Valley road, there was something close to stalemate. Some of the keenest fighting was on the Jammu front, where in November 1948 Indian forces achieved a key objective, to relieve the siege of the town of Poonch. It had taken them a year, but with Indian troops prevailing, thousands of Sikh and Hindu refugees who had poured into the town when the conflict erupted were brought to safety.

Towards the end of 1948, moves began to achieve a ceasefire. It has often been said that the British commanders-in-chief of the two armies—Sir Douglas Gracey in Pakistan and Sir Roy Bucher in India—hastened the process, worried that the imminent appointment of the first Indian commander-in-chief General Cariappa in mid-January 1949 might frustrate an end to hostilities. Mountbatten had left for home in June, and this was the last chance for British nationals directly to shape the region's destiny. Given Britain's complicity in the immense human tragedy that accompanied Partition, perhaps bringing an end to a messy, indecisive war was modest recompense. The two commanders-in-chief were negotiating directly in the final stages of the ceasefire talks. There's a certain inevitability about the way military veterans on both sides have lamented that if only there had been a few more days or weeks before a ceasefire, their army would have gained the upper hand. Indian veterans have said that they were about to crack Pakistani resistance and advance along the Jhelum Valley road. Their old comrades and sparring partners in Pakistan have insisted that with just a little more time they would have been able to launch a counter-offensive, recapture Poonch, and advance on the city of Jammu. The real anxiety of both armies and governments was that the longer the war went on, the more likely it was to spread to the Punjab border, and erupt into an all-out conflict. Neither country had the stomach or resources for such a showdown.

A ceasefire came into force on New Year's Day 1949, with a defined role for the United Nations in supervising the end to hostilities. The ceasefire held, at first. By the end of January, a small United Nations military team was in place to help demarcate the ceasefire line and oversee

the truce. On the first count, the UN can claim some success. The ceasefire line was pencilled in on the map by November 1949. In the Kashmir Valley, it has hardly changed in the intervening decades, being a de facto partition line between India and Pakistan and much more impermeable than most international borders. But there was no lasting end to hostilities. UNMOGIP, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, has had the soul-destroying task of documenting breaches of the ceasefire to the best of its ability—and there have been many thousands over the years—without having any means of keeping the peace. It still has headquarters in Rawalpindi and Srinagar, and a string of small offices on both sides of the line of control—including, at one time, a base in Baramulla just a short stroll from St Joseph's convent and hospital. When last I called there, there was a lonely South Korean soldier going stir-crazy—confined to two rooms, and not even able to venture out to buy groceries without an Indian escort. His radio set was the only means of contact with his colleagues. Few UN forces can have spent so much effort over so many years to so little purpose.

Telling Stories and Making Myths

Powerful stories make potent propaganda, and the accounts of the tribesmen's attack on Baramulla have, from the first moment, been coloured by the causes and interests of those reciting them. India has used the tales of sacrilege, atrocities and rapacious looting to damn the invaders from Pakistan and buttress its own claim to Kashmir. It has found and developed martyrs to add lustre to its argument. Pakistan has attempted to minimise and extenuate, alleging that over the years Indian misdemeanours have vastly outweighed any lapses by members of the lashkar. The Catholic church, or at least a section of it, has sought to develop a claim to saintly status for the young Spanish nun who died. And Western journalists and novelists have found in the episode stirring subject matter, evoking images of resolute, upright Europeans at the mercy of vengeful, violating Muslim tribesmen. All these bear perhaps an element of truth and more than a hint of myth. In these stark accounts of heroes and villains, each interest group has developed its own heroes and its own narrative to honour their courage and the cause they championed.

Just two weeks after the tribal army entered Kashmir, Sir George Cunningham, the governor of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, noted in his diary that two American women journalists from the photo-news magazine *Life* had been refused permission to go to Abbottabad, the nerve centre of the lashkar's operation, and to Baramulla. Margaret Bourke-White, one of those journalists, was not so easily thrown off course.[1] In the ensuing weeks, she managed to get to both towns. Bourke-White had already met and photographed Jinnah for what turned out to be one of his most memorable portraits, capturing both his growing physical frailty and his intellectual stamina and determination. His gaunt, hawk-eyed features, accentuated by his trademark astrakhan cap, peered out from *Life*'s front cover in January 1948. Margaret Bourke-White, a

New Yorker, had provided *Life* with its first front cover in 1936, and became one of the most renowned photojournalists of her generation. She was in Europe for much of the Second World War and, memorably, in Moscow when Hitler turned on his Soviet ally.

In 1946, Margaret Bourke-White abandoned what she termed the 'decay of Europe' to take on a new assignment for *Life* in India. 'I witnessed that extremely rare event in the history of nations,' she wrote, 'the birth of twins.'[2] Her photographs of Partition, with their sharply etched depictions of human upheaval and endurance, are among the most vivid images from that tragic and momentous episode. Some were not simply posed, but staged and manipulated beyond normal bounds. 'We were there for hours,' recalled the *Life* reporter working alongside Bourke-White when she captured her iconic images of destitute refugees. 'She told them to go back again and again and again. They were too frightened to say no. They were dying.'[3] In spite of the anguish she witnessed at independence, she bore the conviction that India was set to take an important place in the world. 'Perhaps it was because I had come to India almost directly from the stagnation of Germany that the freshness, the quickening life of India struck me with such impact. Europe seemed heavy with the death of an era; India stood eager and shining with hope in the threshold of a new life.'[4] She expressed her sense of optimism and recounted her experiences in India and Pakistan in a book published two years after Partition entitled *Halfway to Freedom: A Report on the New India*. It included one of the first renditions of the Baramulla story in the more enduring format of a book.

Bourke-White managed, in spite of the obstructions imposed by the Pakistan authorities, to get to Abbottabad, where she met some of the nuns who had been evacuated from Baramulla. 'The grave-faced sister from whom I got the details had been in the babies' ward on the convent grounds when the tribesmen began smashing up X-ray equipment, throwing medicine bottles to the ground, ripping the statuettes of saints out of the chapel, and shooting up the place generally.'[5] By the time she reached Abbottabad, the authorities had apparently sought to disguise the scale of the military operation being masterminded from the town. An informant of British diplomats, who was apparently in Abbottabad through the first half of November, reported: 'When the lady correspondents of "Life" went up, the local authorities got advance information—Abbottabad was cleared.'[6] Bourke-White appears not to have been put off the scent. She recounted how she had 'slipped out unescorted and . . . saw such things as the group of several hundred Pathans I met

shouting and yelling along the main highway leading from [Rawal]Pindi to Kashmir':

> They had erected a cardboard victory arch over the road, decorated it with greenery and flower garlands, and were waving green flags bearing the central star and crescent of the Muslim League. They were waiting for their leader, Badsha Gul, of the Mohmand tribe, who was bringing one thousand men, a convoy of trucks, and ammunition. Unlike higher officials, these tribesmen seemed to know what was going on when I questioned them.
>
> 'Are you going into Kashmir?' I asked.
>
> 'Why not?' they said. 'We are all Muslims. We are going to help our Muslim brothers in Kashmir.'
>
> Sometimes their help to their brother Muslims was accomplished so quickly that the trucks and buses would come back within a day or two bursting with loot, only to return to Kashmir with more tribesmen, to repeat their indiscriminate 'liberating'—and terrorizing of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim villager alike.[7]

Some of the weapons came from small arms factories in the Frontier, one of which Bourke-White had photographed, but she surmised that most were handed out by the Pakistan authorities.

Several weeks later, and by a circuitous route, Margaret Bourke-White managed to reach Baramulla. She flew to Srinagar in mid-December 1947, and was shown around by one of the leading left-wing supporters of Sheikh Abdullah's National Conference, B.P.L. Bedi.[8] She found Baramulla 'as heaped with rubble and blackened with fire as those battered jewels of Italian towns through which many of us moved during our war in Italy.' The tone of her account, and indeed of her book, was markedly hostile to Pakistan, and somewhat naïvely uncritical of the National Conference. She retold stories of the suffering of Kashmiris at the hands of the tribesmen, and she wrote of her visit to what was left of St Joseph's mission:

> Bedi and I walked up the hill to the deserted convent. It was badly defaced and littered, and a delegation of students from Srinagar was coming next day to clean it up and salvage what remained of the library. The group had been carefully selected to include Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims, and would be escorted by members of the Kashmiri Home Guard, both men and women—these too chosen

> symbolically from the three religions. They would put the Christian mission in as good order as they could in time for Christmas Day.
>
> We made our way into the ravaged chapel, wading through the mass of torn hymnbooks and broken sacred statuary. The altar was deep in rubble. Bedi stooped down over it and picked up one fragment, turning it over carefully in his big hands. It was the broken head of Jesus, with just one eye remaining.
>
> 'How beautiful it is', said Bedi, 'this single eye of Christ looking out so calmly on the world. We shall preserve it always in Kashmir as a permanent reminder of the unity between Indians of all religions which we are trying to achieve.'[9]

It was just the sort of message that the new Indian government, and its Kashmiri allies, wished to propagate.

Margaret Bourke-White also gave powerful impetus to the story of Maqbool Sherwani—'a sort of Robin Hood character, from the stories the townspeople told me'—a National Conference activist in Baramulla who was tortured and killed by the tribesmen. 'His martyrdom had taken place almost under the shadow of the convent walls,' she asserted, somewhat uncritically recycling what she had been told, 'and in the memory of the devoted Kashmiris he was fast assuming the stature of a saint.' She portrayed Sherwani as a champion of religious tolerance who had sought to frustrate the tribesmen's advance before being captured and crucified, with nails through his hands and the words 'The punishment of a traitor is death' scratched crudely on his forehead. 'Once more Sherwani cried out, "Victory to Hindu-Muslim unity," and fourteen tribesmen shot bullets into his body.' Bourke-White recounted how the dead man was already becoming known as Mujahid Sherwani.[10] In a succinct couple of pages, she wrote an account of Sherwani and his martyrdom, full of precise detail particularly of his death and with quasi-biblical imagery which could have come out of a saint's life of many centuries earlier. Martyrs have been an important factor in providing moral succour to both religious and secular movements—in Kashmir, every cause has its martyrs. The separatist movement, since 1989, has put a lot of emphasis on shaheed or martyrs, and has interred many of its dead in martyrs' graveyards. In response, the Indian authorities have disinterred the story of Maqbool Sherwani as a valorous victim of an earlier generation of outsider separatists, a Kashmiri Muslim who died for the cause of secularism and Indian unity.

Maqbool Sherwani was not a myth. He was a well-known political activist in Baramulla who, without doubt, tried to frustrate the raiders, and died a particularly brutal death. Francis Rath, who knew Sherwani, described him to me as 'a loafer type of man . . . happy-go-lucky . . . . He was not a politician. He was just a National Conference worker. But a very staunch type of worker.' Pran Nath Jalali had spent time with Sherwani in the maharaja's jails and on their release they both joined the National Conference militia. Jalali told me that Sherwani was among those who offered to go undercover into areas controlled by the tribesmen. 'In fact there was a list of 22 volunteers which we framed to go behind the enemy lines. [Sherwani] was one of them. But being an adventurer and a bit showy—he held public meetings village to village, and rode into the enemy on a motorbike. That motorbike undid him.' Sherwani was, as far as Jalali recalled, the only one of these behind-the-lines militia volunteers to lose his life.

A rival political activist in Baramulla, Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, has depicted Sherwani as a 'semi-literate man of about 40 years' who was the second-in-command of the National Conference in the town and had proved 'very unpopular for his goondaism [thuggery]'. He had apparently tried to disrupt Jinnah's visit to Baramulla in July 1944, and is variously reputed to have escaped vengeance by either paddling a boat across the Jhelum or jumping into the river and swimming. Saraf, however, acknowledged both Sherwani's devotion to Sheikh Abdullah and the courage with which he sought to impede the lashkar's advance and approached his own death. 'He was brought down to Baramula and after several days of interrogation, was tied to an electric pole in the centre of the town and nails were driven into his hands and forehead. Ultimately he was shot dead. How fanatically devoted he was to his leader and basically how brave he was, may be judged from the fact that even while he was being so nailed, he continued to shout "Sher-e-Kashmir Zindabad" [Long Live the Lion of Kashmir]. He was made a martyr not only by the National Conference but also by the Indian Government.'[11]

The process of elevating Maqbool Sherwani to the status of a political martyr began as soon as the Indian army entered Baramulla, just a day or two after the killing. His death was a powerful and dramatic story, and its rendition suited the purposes of both Kashmir's governing party and the Indian authorities. It also helped invest the town of Baramulla—which had at first welcomed the raiders, and then suffered at their hands—with the distinction by association of producing a hero

from the winning side. The *Times of India* correspondent who visited Baramulla on 9 November, the day after its capture by Indian troops, reported that the 'most popular local leader of the National Conference, Meer Maqbool Sherwani, went through torture for his politics and was finally bound to wooden bars and shot dead—14 bullet holes were found in his body.' The *Statesman* carried a slightly different story, reporting that Sherwani was 'publicly executed by the raiders who denounced him as a traitor. He had three days previously surreptitiously motor-cycled to Srinagar to report to the head of the Emergency Administration,' in other words, to Sheikh Abdullah. The *Hindustan Times* carried a variant on the same theme, recounting how Sherwani, 'the local National Conference leader in Baramula . . . was tied to a post in one of the squares of the town and sprayed with Bren-gun fire. After he was killed, a notice was nailed on his forehead saying that Sherwani was a traitor and death was his just fate.'[12] The communist *People's Age* carried an almost hagiographical article entitled 'How Baramula Became Maqboolabad: No Greater Courage Can Any Indian Show Than Kashmir's Maqbool Sherwani'. It recounted Sherwani's scouting by motorbike, and the fourteen bullets which ended his life, and asserted that a play about Sherwani had already been written which would be performed across the Valley by National Conference drama squads.[13]

Two weeks after Maqbool Sherwani's death, Mahatma Gandhi took up the Sherwani story at a prayer meeting in Delhi. 'On learning that he was an important leader of the National Conference, the invaders tied him to two posts near the Nishat Talkies,' Gandhi recounted. 'They beat him first and then asked him to repudiate the All-Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and its leader, Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Abdulla[h]. They asked him to swear allegiance to the so-called Azad Kashmir Provisional Government which had its headquarters in Palandri':

> Sherwani stoutly refused to repudiate his national organization and told the invaders that Sher-e-Kashmir was the head of affairs now that Indian Union troops had arrived and the invaders would be driven out in a few days.
>
> This enraged and frightened the invader gangs who riddled him with 14 bullets. They cut off his nose, disfigured his face and stuck a notice on his body with the words: This is a traitor. His name is Sherwani. This is the fate all traitors will get.
>
> But within 48 hours of this cold-blooded murder and sadistic terror, Sherwani's prophecy came true and the invaders ran pell-mell out of Baramula, with Indian Union troops in hot pursuit.

> This was a martyrdom, said Mahatma Gandhi, of which anyone, be he Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or any other, would be proud.[14]

Maqbool Sherwani had been declared a martyr by the man with more moral authority than any other in the subcontinent, who was himself to die what many would regard as a martyr's death two months later.

From then on, the Sherwani story was co-opted into those accounts of the origins of the Kashmir conflict sympathetic to India. Sheikh Abdullah, in his autobiography, paid tribute to his political co-worker. General 'Bogey' Sen recounted using the Sherwani incident to defuse Kashmiri criticism of the Indian army, telling (so he says) Sheikh Abdullah to his face: 'If Maqbool Sherwani's torture and murder at Baramula was any indicator of the tribesmen's attitude, and had my Brigade been defeated at the battle of Shalateng, what did he visualise would have happened to him as head of the National Conference Volunteers?' A Kashmir government pamphlet published dashing photos of Sherwani, including one showing him at rifle practice, and described him as the 'hero of Baramulla'. The official Indian defence ministry account of the conflict pointedly recounted how a 'Kashmiri Muslim patriot, Maqbool Sherwani, was shot dead in the public square for professing to treat Hindus and Sikhs as his brothers'. A more recent reference to his martyrdom made the still more pointed remark that 'in every subsequent war, including Pakistan's proxy war of the 1990s, thousands of Kashmiri Muslims actively helped the Indian forces against Pakistan, and often sacrificed their lives in the process'.[15]

The Sherwani message was developed and adapted by one of India's most renowned, and prolific, writers. Mulk Raj Anand's novel *Death of a Hero: Epitaph for Maqbool Sherwani* appeared in 1963. It is a slender book, both in bulk and quality. A critic sympathetic to Anand has described the novel as 'an unimpressive work' that 'does serious damage to Anand's reputation as a novelist'.[16] Although the author or his publishers at various times suggested that the novel was written shortly after the events it described, and that Anand was in Kashmir at the time of the invasion, neither assertion appears to be correct—though Anand had certainly visited Kashmir in earlier years. Those close to Anand have suggested that he alighted on the story of Maqbool Sherwani as a device to write about Kashmir. It may have been something more than that. Certainly, Mulk Raj Anand, a radical in his early writing years, felt strongly about the Kashmir issue. He wrote a homage to V.K. Krishna Menon, the Indian defence minister, to accompany the text of Menon's marathon eight-hour speech on Kashmir at the UN Security Council in 1957. Here again,

Anand referred to the ordeal of Maqbool Sherwani, quoting (without attribution) from Margaret Bourke-White, who is likely to have been an important source for the story as recited in *Death of a Hero*.[17]

The novel's interest lies in the way it develops and perpetuates a political myth rather than in its literary merits. The rather flimsy caricatures presented in place of developing strong characters, and the failure to explore Sherwani's motivation or indeed much of his experience at the hands of the attackers, leave the book flat and unconvincing, the more so because it contains little incident or context. It is evident, however, that Anand took some trouble to find out about the events in Baramulla, and the people involved—though how he pursued this task is unclear. Mulk Raj Anand presents Maqbool Sherwani as young, radical, anti-feudal, and sceptical of conventional religion—and also impetuous, with a 'lack of mature judgement'. The novel opens with Sherwani speeding back to Baramulla by motorcycle, instructed to organize resistance to the raiders, (though how, we are never told), only to encounter betrayal. He has a face-to-face meeting with the leader of the raiders, Khurshid Anwar, whose 'English clothes seemed to revive the humiliation at the hands of the white sahib tourists in Kashmir'. He is captured, refuses to renounce the National Conference, is shot by a Pathan firing squad and tied to a wooden pole with the word 'Kafir' written on the lapel of his shirt. 'The body looked almost like a scarecrow, but also like that of a Yessuh Messiah on the cross'—and this image of a crucifixion featured on the book's initial dust-jacket, giving it more of an air of a Christian morality tale than an Indian nationalist parable. Anand also weaves into the novel references to the attack on the Catholic mission, and a character refers not just to the killing and injuring of nuns, but to how the attackers 'relieved themselves in the chapel!' Anand makes reference to several political personalities of the time, though, strangely, not to Sheikh Abdullah (who was in detention at the time of the novel's publication, as he had been for almost all the previous decade, which perhaps explains the author's reticence). But he does not seek to offer a rounded account of the conflict, and there is no real attempt to understand why the invaders came to Kashmir, beyond passing references to loot.

In recent years, the Indian authorities have sought to memorialise Maqbool Sherwani. The story of his heroism has been recounted—one particularly exuberant, and detailed account insisted that his 'blood liberated the soil on which it sealed for all time the silken bonds of unity binding the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Kashmir—and the rest of India'[18]—and the state governor in his Republic Day speech in 2005

lauded the opening of a Maqbool Sherwani memorial hall in memory of 'this great hero who sacrificed his life to save the people during the Rape of Baramulla, which suffered a holocaust at the hands of tribal raiders from Pakistan'.

The more the Indian authorities portrayed Sherwani as a hero and martyr in India's cause, the greater the reluctance of local people to champion his memory in a town with a reputation as a stronghold of separatist groups. A local newspaper, the *Daily Excelsior*, commenting on the renovating of the Sherwani memorial hall, recalled that the building had been deserted, 'virtually in a shambles', ever since the start of the armed militancy. 'One can't help but notice,' the newspaper commented, 'that the ordinary people are not irreverent but tend to keep silent about him. Is it because they have developed some aversion towards him? Or, is it that they feel that discretion is the better part of valour and no useful purpose will be served by risking their life at the hands of foreign mercenaries who are still around and who don't have any love for the likes of Sherwani?'

Anyone promoted by one side of the conflict as a hero is just about certain to be denigrated or ignored by the other side. If you believe that India's rule in Kashmir is illegitimate, or simply that this is the safest view to espouse, what purpose is served in tarnishing the reputation of the first fighters to take up arms against India's claim or in praising India's hero from that time? Those memories of Kashmir at the time of the lashkar's advance that are shared with outsiders often betray more about present political loyalties than past traumas, and are influenced by the perception that if you are unguarded in those recollections you choose to recite, then you do so at your peril. In a Valley so politicised, so soaked in violence and suspicion, it is difficult to get anyone to make public a memory which goes against their personal, community or political interests.

Alongside the memory of Maqbool Sherwani, the Indian authorities also had other martyrs to honour. The Indian army had a number of casualties who were honoured for their bravery. In particular, Lieutenant Colonel Ranjit Rai, commander of the first Indian troops to land in Kashmir who died within thirty-six hours of the start of the airlift, remains one of the most renowned of India's war dead. He was the first Indian officer to die in action defending the newly independent nation's sovereignty—in the words of the official war history, he was a 'gallant son of India' who died 'in defence of freedom and of the weak'.[19] The raiders and their allies in the Pakistan armed forces, by contrast, have not developed any conspicuous cults of martyrs from their casualties in

the initial fighting in Kashmir—unlike the more recent fighters against Indian rule in the Kashmir Valley. Nor is Colonel Tom Dykes much remembered, in spite of his valour in trying to save others when the mission was under attack. He is buried in the only Commonwealth war grave in Kashmir—listed, curiously, alongside the war graves in Pakistan not in the Indian registers—but his family apart, there was no one with an interest in memorialising Tom Dykes. He was the martyr no one needed. Dykes was, at the time of his death, something of a historical anachronism. The British Indian army had run its course, and Tom Dykes and his family were, it seems, within weeks of joining the British military exodus from India. Although he was acting commandant of the Sikh Regimental Centre at the time of his death, his tenure had been brief, and he was a relic of the colonial era rather than an emblem of independent India. Nowadays, the regimental centre can offer little information about Colonel Dykes—and appears never to have sought to invoke his memory to instil regimental pride or loyalty. The Baramulla nuns tend his grave with care and respect his memory, but Tom Dykes was not a member of the mission community, and they had their own martyr to honour and promote.

Visitors to St Joseph's mission, and enquirers after the events there in 1947, are often given a small religious tract, *I Will Be the First*. It is the story of Mother Teresalina, the young Spanish nun killed in the attack on the mission, graced with a photograph of her in a white nun's habit. The opening paragraphs explain the choice of title. When the young missionary's uncle, a priest, said he had never heard of a Saint Teresalina, she is reputed to have riposted, playfully: 'I will be the first!' The story of her life, vocation, suffering and death is told concisely and respectfully. 'Mother Teresalina had always yearned to be a saint,' this tract asserts. 'Her soul had instinctively turned towards martyrdom.' The pamphlet also rehearses what it says were the young nun's dying words: 'I offer myself as a victim for the conversion of Kashmir.'[20] This has become the received clerical account of Teresalina's dying moments, recycled in Catholic literature in several languages.[21] It may have been something other than the literal truth. Although Father Shanks was present at Teresalina's death, and was greatly moved by her courage and devotion, his various accounts of the episode do not include any account of her dying words. Indeed, he recorded that the nun's prayers gradually faded away as she 'slowly sank into unconsciousness'.

The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary had, in 1946, celebrated the beatification of seven religious martyrs from their order who had been killed in China at the beginning of the century. Their group portrait is

still on display at the order's convents. Reflection on the beatification was one of the themes of the Baramulla convent's religious retreat in October 1947, brought to a hasty end by word of the approaching invaders. The account of Teresalina's death was certainly moulded to fit the interests of the religious order, and to some extent to seek to bring attention to what the nuns may well have regarded as one of the more neglected (and, it has to be said, less successful) fields of missionary endeavour. Decades later, Father Hormise Nirmal Raj, a Catholic priest who got to know some of Teresalina's fellow nuns at Baramulla and had access to clerical records and publications, set down his (again, deeply hagiographical) account of the Spanish assistant mother and her passing. And he pleaded directly for a goal that other clerical writers had only hinted at—that Teresalina be made a saint:

> From heaven too her mission has continued since her death in the land she so loved and died for. She became the first Martyr of Kashmir . . . . It is said that amid falling bombs, the body of this victim holocaust was laid to rest in the shade of a large tree, side by side with the five others, who had gone home to God with her. For more than two years, the bodies were laid there. But when the expulsed missionaries came back and took out the body of Mother Teresalina to be buried in the cemetery, it is said that the body was found intact and so the carpenter had to make a big coffin instead of the casket he had made to bury the body. It may wont be too long for the Kashmiris to see their beloved sister who came to their homes with medicine and consoling the afflicted, be one day canonised as the first Martyred saint of the Valley by the Catholic Church.[22]

While the nuns at Baramulla may still cherish the hope that Mother Teresalina will one day be beatified, the first stage towards being made a saint, the odds are against her. She had only spent a matter of weeks in Kashmir at the time of her death, and there was, and is, no groundswell of support for her elevation among local Kashmiris. The Kashmir Valley remains a low priority for the church, an area where it has few adherents. And the notion of conversion, which Teresalina was said to have lauded in her last words, is distinctly hazardous in zealously Muslim areas, so much so that nowadays Catholic missionary priests in Kashmir insist that the assistant mother was talking of the spiritual conversion of hearts and minds rather than conversion from one faith to another.

The clerical accounts of Teresalina's dying words may well have been embroidered to suit the purpose of those retelling the story. It's not so much an invention as an embellishment of a story in the course of its repeated retelling. There are other aspects of the clerical accounts of the attack on Baramulla which also have an element of legend, more a recital of what might be imagined to have happened to give a heightened sense of drama than a literal account of events. Father Nirmal Raj, in his account of the attack, rehearsed how 'many Sikh women collected themselves in the gurdwara across the river in Baramulla; when the Pathans arrived, they ran in a frenzy into the river and most of them got drowned'. He placed this recollection in the words of Father Shanks, though it doesn't appear in any of Shanks's extant accounts of the attack.[23] More curiously, a medical missionary showing me round the convent grounds in Baramulla pointed to a disused well which, she insisted, was where several local Sikh women died. 'So many Sikh women ran away from their homes and came to the hospital and took shelter in the wards, so it was overcrowded,' she told me while standing by the well. 'The raiders spotted them, so they [the Sikh women] ran away from the hospital, behind the convent, and they came to this well and they committed suicide. It was covered actually with bodies.' This is the only account that has been found of Sikh women jumping down a well in the grounds of the mission. There were such mass suicides elsewhere, the most renowned being at the village of Thoa Khalsa outside Rawalpindi.[24] But the transference of such events to Baramulla, where such things might have happened but probably didn't, appears to be part of the confusion of fact with legend, and the building of a story with the elements needed to valorise individuals and institutions.

Different accounts built up different heroes. Sydney Smith of the *Daily Express*, mindful of his British audience, accentuated the valour of personalities with whom his readers could relate. 'There is a hero among the refugees—Father George Shanks, born in Newcastle-on-Tyne,' Smith's front-page report declared once he was in Abbottabad and able to file to his news desk. 'He became our leader and comforter as we were harassed day and night by tribesmen and dive-bombed and cannon-shelled by Tempests and Spitfires of the Indian Air Force.' The news report, bearing a photograph of a handsome, dog-collared young man was entitled: 'Priest from Britain guards the girls'.[25] Sydney Smith's much more detailed account in the following day's paper, headlined 'Ten Days of Terror', combined a tale of tragedy and fear with a recital of the 'humour, courage and faith' which enabled the seventy-five people trapped in the convent

hospital to endure their ordeal. He praised the calming guidance of Fathers Shanks and Mallett, and of the European nuns who displayed 'cheerful sweetness and endless energy' and whose 'calm, unfrightened faces were like a blessing on us'. Father Shanks himself was embarrassed by the tone of Smith's reports. 'I was horrified to see the meal which the Daily Express had made of our Baramulla affair,' he told the order's superior general in a letter, but hoped nevertheless that Mill Hill would 'be able to turn it to useful purpose'.[26]

Sydney Smith made the most of his exclusive, as did the *Daily Express* which devoted almost an entire page to the story. Smith was not simply a reporter or an eyewitness to the events in Baramulla. He had shared in the captivity. 'I was lucky enough to be there,' Smith declared—though what a scoop-hungry journalist regarded as good fortune, most would have regarded as grave misfortune. The story Smith recounted had all the elements of great drama—violence, pathos, heroism, stoicism, action, peril, a clash of cultures, even sexual menace (though not conventional romance), and the exoticism of those almost magical place names, the North West Frontier and Kashmir. His journalism certainly gained the attention of writers and film-makers. In Smith's cuttings books, hefty volumes bearing his reports from one world trouble spot after another, there is a telegram sent to Smith in Rome in August 1948. It was from one of the top British film-makers of the time, Anthony Havelock-Allan. He wanted to make a film about the attack on Baramulla. Havelock-Allan urged Smith to 'write from memory [the] most detailed account possible including account of how you went to Baramula,' and was insistent that 'all available material' should be with his screenwriters by the end of the year. The telegram makes tantalising mention of a diary Smith had kept which was in a trunk being shipped from Mumbai.[27]

Havelock-Allan's ambition to make a movie out of Smith's story was not some sudden wheeze which rapidly fizzled out. Several months later, in April 1949, he was still on the quest—writing to the superior general at Mill Hill, enclosing a typescript of Smith's 'Ten Days of Terror' report and seeking a meeting. 'The incidents related in the story seemed to me at the time to offer great possibilities for a fine and deeply moving film,' he wrote. 'I have been in contact with the editor of the newspaper in question and with the author of the article and have made the necessary arrangements to cover their rights in the story.'[28] For whatever reason, the project didn't take off. Perhaps because another key figure in the creative arts in post-war Britain was also on the same trail.

The British novelist H.E. Bates noticed Smith's reports from

Kashmir—though whether he read them at the time and salted them away, or was alerted to the story later, is uncertain—and they appear to have provided the spark for one of his strongest selling novels *The Scarlet Sword*. Bates never visited Kashmir, but the story of besieged Europeans at a remote mission captured his imagination. While Bates is now best known for his warm-hearted stories of rural England, he also wrote several novels and short stories which have war and conflict as either their main theme or the backdrop for the intimate dramas he depicts. H.E. Bates had begun to develop a reputation as a writer in the 1930s. During the Second World War, he was taken on by the British air ministry to write stories which would improve morale and reflect well on the Royal Air Force. In January 1945, in what was his first and probably his only trip to India, Bates travelled to Calcutta (now Kolkata) and on to Burma at the initiative of Army Public Relations to get a feel for the war in the east. The result was, over the next five years, what are sometimes described as his trilogy of eastern novels. *The Purple Plain* and *The Jacaranda Tree* are both set in Burma, a location which Bates writes about with an authority born of first-hand observation. *The Scarlet Sword*, published in 1950, returns to some of the themes of *The Purple Plain*—a test of endurance in a hostile environment, an isolated Christian mission, even such incidentals as battle-hardened, world-weary military nurses. The novel was, in some ways, an attempt to recreate themes and storylines that had already delivered literary and critical success.

How exactly Bates alighted on the story of Baramulla is not clear. His interest was not in Kashmir—about which he provides little topographical, historical or political context—but about human responses to extreme adversity. He seems to have done a little research beyond raiding newspaper cuttings. But the greater part of the plot, the people, the characterisation and the incidental detail was lifted from Sydney Smith's reports in the *Daily Express*—without any public acknowledgement. Indeed, there is little in *The Scarlet Sword* that doesn't derive from Smith's journalism. Bates based the greater part of a chapter on an incident related in the *Express* of how the priests had sought to make Sikh and Hindu women in the convent less vulnerable to attack by cutting their hair and dressing them in European clothes. The novelist adapted as a repeated refrain Smith's account of an Afridi officer who commiserated on the excesses committed by Mahsud tribesmen by saying: 'They haven't learned etiquette.' Bates turned Smith's passing mention of the 'tame white rabbits' tended in the convent grounds by an elderly nun into a recurring allegory of captivity.

The extent to which H.E. Bates borrowed description and imagery is striking, and indeed disconcerting. Sydney Smith made reference to one of the more unlikely captives in the convent, the teenage Kaushalya, 'a pretty and sullen Hindu dancing girl from the dock streets of Bombay. Kaushalya, her ears brilliant with great turquoise rings and her fingers still shining with silver, spent most of each day and night smoking cigarettes in a corner with a blanket clutched before her face.' Bates must surely have had this cutting in front of him as he wrote of a woman by the same name, 'sullen', constantly smoking, a dancer from 'the dock roads of Bombay' with 'big turquoise earrings' and fingers 'so covered with rings that they were like slender silver barrels'.[29] The novel contains many other clear echoes of Smith's news reports. To cite just one further example, Smith writes of 'the 12-year-old Pathan, Pur Dil Khan, who had run away from home armed with a rifle cleaning rod'. Bates makes reference to Pir Dil Khan, a 'tight-headed Pathan boy of twelve or thirteen who was carrying in his hand the ram-rod of a shot-gun'. Bates's Pir Dil Khan follows Smith's Pur Dil Khan in developing an attachment to one of the mission priests, to whom he provides looted cigarettes.[30] There are several dozen such borrowings of incident, description and on occasion dialogue. H.E. Bates acknowledged his debt, after a fashion, by making one of his central characters a war-weary British journalist named Crane (the reader never finds out his first name), presumably based loosely on Smith. Only loosely, one must suppose, because Crane never once attempts to file a story or reflects on how to make contact with his news editor.

The Scarlet Sword is broadly successful as a novel in exploring the ways in which ordinary, fallible individuals respond to—and by and large, rise to—adversity. But it is marred by the poor development of character and by the absence of context. H.E. Bates also failed to attempt to understand, or even describe, non-Europeans. All the main characters of the novel are British—indeed no Kashmiri has more than a walk-on part, and only one non-European, the convent-educated Afridi officer who manages to stop the initial slaughter, is allotted more than a few words of dialogue. While almost all the Europeans in the mission are given the dignity of a name, most of the non-Europeans who took refuge there, and all but two of the attackers, are anonymous. Bates's pages are sprinkled with references to 'a Pathan', 'a Hindu woman', 'two Afridis', 'a young Sikh woman' or 'a dead Kashmiri'—their lives, stories and motives are not explored.

In the judgement of the Bates scholar Dean Baldwin, *The Scarlet Sword* is 'the last and least successful of the Eastern novels'. It achieved

mixed reviews. 'A band of Pathans and Afridis burst upon the scene like mad Martians dropped out of the sky,' one reviewer lamented. 'Nobody in the story seems to know what is going on or why; nowhere in it does Mr Bates offer a key to the meaning of this episode . . . . Without it, the bloody episode is quite meaningless. A whole dimension is missing.'[31] But by 1950, Bates was an immensely popular writer. *The Scarlet Sword* appeared in many editions, and the ease with which it can be found in second-hand bookshops is testament to its one-time popularity.

Bates appears to have been in two minds about whether to acknowledge the Baramulla incident as the basis for his novel. The town in which *The Scarlet Sword* is set is never named, nor is the mission—though at one stage, in his teasing way, Bates makes the older priest suggest that the survivors 'burn a candle for St Joseph'. The Kashmir setting, however, is made clear from the opening page. Most of the characters are given fictional names—thus Father Shanks becomes Father Anstey (though, again mischievously, another incidental character is given the name Miss Shanks) and Colonel Dykes is depicted as Colonel Mathieson (the name of another Scottish officer who achieved some renown in Gilgit in another corner of the princely state). A few of the non-European characters lifted from Smith's reportage are given their actual names. So too is Mother Teresalina, the Spanish nun who died in the attack, and Greta Barretto (Baretta, according to Bates), the mission doctor. The account of events was changed in some instances: in *The Scarlet Sword*, the colonel's wife is depicted as pregnant rather than having recently given birth; the colonel himself dies not in the initial attack but in a later Indian air attack; Teresalina survives and the mother superior is killed rather than the other way round; and the mission is eventually evacuated by Indian rather than Pakistani troops.

The attempt to achieve a broadly accurate rendition of events, one that anyone who knew about the Baramulla incident would immediately recognise, perhaps inevitably upset both survivors and bereaved families. By depicting human frailties and weaknesses, which are lifelike but may not have corresponded to the characters of those who suffered or died at St Joseph's mission, Bates made plenty of enemies. His rendition of both sexual violence and sexual attraction, the perceived disparagement of those of mixed racial heritage, and depictions of individual battles of faith and religiosity, aroused hurt and anger. Tom Dykes junior recalled that his paternal grandmother had been upset by the book. The family of another victim, Jose Barretto, was even more incensed, and his children to this day remain dismayed by what they regard as the cheapening of

his martyrdom. There was, apparently, a protest to Bates's publishers, urging that the book either be amended or withdrawn. It didn't help that some editions of *The Scarlet Sword* placed more emphasis on the sex than the spirituality. 'A Lusty Novel Of Civil War In India' proclaimed a 35-cent American paperback edition featuring on its cover a drawing of a naked, lipstick-adorned redhead cowering as a rifle-wielding Pathan looms over her. Readers in search of sexual excitement would have been disappointed.

It may have been H.E. Bates who stung Father George Shanks into his most detailed retelling of the Baramulla attack. The clerical press had followed Sydney Smith in presenting Father Shanks as a hero. *The Scarlet Sword*, by contrast, downgrades the older priest to a minor role, presenting him as tired and flawed, 'rather like the ghost of a carthorse. The sinews had dried up; perhaps he was too old for the job.'[32] The younger priest, Father Simpson (portrayed as flabby in build and resolve, whereas his real-life counterpart was gaunt), is given the greater role, as he discovers new reserves of faith, compassion and character during the tragedy befalling the mission. Perhaps encouraged or goaded by the success of Bates's book, George Shanks took up a desk diary and set to work assembling the fullest first-hand account of the attack. Shanks appears to have been uncertain about whether to write a straightforward factual account, or to develop character and dialogue in the fashion of a story based on the events he had lived through. In the event, although he set down by hand about one hundred pages of text and notes, he never finished the first draft.

Mulk Raj Anand and H.E. Bates offer deeply contrasting literary accounts of the lashkar's descent on Baramulla—both instinctively critical of the tribal fighters, but otherwise with little common in approach. Given that both *Death of a Hero* and *The Scarlet Sword* are based on events that took place in the same small town over a period of less than two weeks, they have only the most tangential of links in plot and personality. Anand refers only in passing to events at the mission, while Bates makes only fleeting reference to the destruction and killing beyond the mission walls.

A third novel was also based upon the lashkar's invasion of Kashmir—and this by someone who was there. The *Observer*'s Alan Moorehead—a renowned and widely read foreign correspondent, writer and historian—published *The Rage of the Vulture* in 1948. The novel is set in what he calls Kandahar, but is unmistakeably the story he witnessed in Srinagar the previous year. The emphasis is on the mounting anxiety as the tribesmen approach the city: 'They were Chaos, they were the

outer darkness, the pure essence of violence. When they arrived they automatically looted your house, raped your wife and left you dead on the smoking ruins of your belongings. They performed all this without passion or anger, purely as a mechanical reaction. They were as relentless and objective as death itself.'[33] Moorehead dwells on the response of the dwindling, cantankerous British community in the Kashmiri capital. While there is no fictionalized representation of the attack on the Baramulla mission, the account of the death of a British ex-army couple, John and Louise Britten, in an isolated hospital in Kashmir bears a distinct echo of the fate of Tom and Biddy Dykes. There are also references to the raiders' propensity to loot and rape and to nuns being displaced. As a novel, Moorehead cannot easily compete in style and technique with H.E. Bates. Yet *The Rage of the Vulture* is a more satisfying literary depiction of the invasion of Kashmir than the writing of either Anand or Bates.

At about the time Monsignor Shanks was setting down in longhand his recollections of the attack on Baramulla, one of the region's most renowned journalists managed to traverse along the same route as the lashkar into Baramulla. Ian Stephens had been the editor of the *Statesman*, at one time the most renowned of India's daily newspapers, for nine years until 1951. In the spring and summer of 1952, he travelled through Pakistan, Kashmir and Afghanistan, and the following year published a highly political account of his travels. Stephens had, he recalled, dined with the Mountbattens on 26 October 1947 at a time when Delhi was buzzing with rumours about the Pathan incursion into Kashmir. 'I was "startled by their one-sided verdict on affairs". They seemed to have "become wholly pro-Hindu". The atmosphere at Government House that night was almost one of war. Pakistan, the Muslim League, and Mr Jinnah were the enemy.'[34] That reflects the tone of much of his writing—intensely critical of Mountbatten, and sympathetic to Pakistan.

Ian Stephens had good contacts in both newly independent countries and in April 1952, in the company of a Danish UN military observer, he managed to cross the ceasefire line at Chakothi into Indian Kashmir—apparently only the third civilian not on official duty to do so in as many years. He recorded that Baramulla 'had been less knocked about by the Pathan incursion of October 1947 than official Indian photographs issued at the time suggested. Parts of it were indeed still a shambles; but large other parts, unreconstructed, stood intact. By comparison with devastated Mirpur in Azad Kashmir, it was thriving and populous.'[35] He visited the convent hospital, where one of the wards was still without a roof lost in Indian bombing raids. He spoke to the

nuns, and retrieved some details of what 'had certainly been a very shameful affair'.

Stephens also recounted an incident from a trip to Miranshah in North Waziristan in February 1948 escorted by tribesmen, some of whom had fought in the advance on Srinagar four months earlier. He got talking to one of his informal bodyguards:

> He and his friends would have taken the city, he asserted, but for the fools at Baramula behind them. These men, the second invading wave, should have sent up reinforcements. Instead, they turned aside, the nincompoops, to loot the smaller town and waste bullets on the queer-clothed foreign women. It was a complete disgrace.
>
> 'What, shooting the women?'
>
> No, no; not that at all. The fools had ruined, within an ace of success, a very pretty little military operation.[36]

It was of course an easy alibi for the tribesmen—they had failed to capture the Valley, but it was someone else's fault.

A decade later, Ian Stephens wrote a book devoted to the establishment of Pakistan. And by then, his views had hardened. The origins of the Kashmir dispute, he stated, lay in 'the impetuous and (some might reckon) unprincipled haste' with which the British, under Mountbatten's lead, pulled out from India. The Kashmiris of the Valley, 'though talented in many ways, tended to be a spiritless, evasive lot, easily overawed'. The Pathans' invasion involved 'dramatic but over-notorious happenings', small by comparison with events in Poonch and Jammu. And as for the attack on the Baramulla mission, it was 'a bad but secondary episode, soon inflated out of all proportion by Indian propaganda aimed at countries of the Christian West. And the time lost over these misdeeds, we can now see, also lost them the campaign—it was of no avail that later waves of invading tribesmen behaved much better, sometimes fighting superbly'.[37]

This reflected the tone of histories written by outsiders broadly sympathetic to Pakistan. L.F. Rushbrook Williams, an academic, administrator and journalist, assembled most of the elements of Pakistan's approach to the lashkar's excesses in a single prose passage. He explained how the attack on the Baramulla mission, and the ensuing casualties 'naturally caused a great sensation, made headlines in the Press, not only of India, but also of the outside world, and brought the Pakistan Government, which was in no way to blame, into undeserved discredit'.

He recounted being told by a Pakistani officer who was 'a volunteer with the Azad Kashmir forces', and who had hurried to Baramulla when he heard about the attack on the mission, that the lashkar had no intention of attacking Europeans. The tribesmen had been 'wandering about, helping themselves to pots of jam and other food, when Colonel Dykes tried to turn them out of the convent at the point of his pistol. Indiscriminate firing then broke out, and tragedy followed.'[38] Whatever extenuation can be offered for the killings and violence at St Joseph's, the suggestion that the attackers were searching for jam sounds particularly hollow.

Another apologia has come from the noted historian of Kashmir, Alastair Lamb, who has asserted that 'whatever happened in Baramula that day is as nothing when compared to what has happened to Kashmiri men, women and children at Indian hands since 1989'. Lamb suggests that those massacres which may have been forestalled by the Indian military airlift in 1947 'were not prevented; they were merely postponed for two generations, with the Indians now the vandals.'[39] It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is a partisan comment rather than a judgement based on historical inquiry.

Pakistan has had the more difficult task in turning the narrative of the lashkar's attack to its political advantage. Pakistan's tribesmen were pushed out of the Kashmir Valley, and the subsequent war failed to advance Pakistan's claim. The indiscipline, looting and abduction that accompanied the tribesmen's invasion was too widely acknowledged, including by some of the Pakistani architects of the operation, to be denied. It's difficult to make heroes out of marauders. On the whole, Pakistani accounts have either maintained a silence about the extent of the robbery and rape, or have sought to blame tribal indiscipline while disavowing any official Pakistani role in instigating or directing the attack. The profound impact of Kashmir on politics within Pakistan's armed forces, and on the tension lines between army and civilian politicians, has also clouded the narrative of the 1947–48 conflict. Akbar Khan and several others involved in providing military leadership to the lashkar were implicated in the Rawalpindi conspiracy case of 1951, the first military attempt to overthrow Pakistan's government. Akbar Khan himself spent four years in jail. He couldn't easily be promoted as a national hero. Indeed, Pakistan's most scholarly history of the lashkar places the blame for Pakistan's failure to capture Kashmir on a single factor: 'the faulty leadership of the tribal horde—or the lack of it. This was the only mistake, and a decisive one at that, for which those who organized the invasion

(no one knows who did) should bear responsibility.' This same historian concludes that whatever the lashkar's excesses, they succeeded in establishing Pakistan's control over part of the former princely state. 'The tribesmen were guilty of many sins, and heinous ones too, but it must be acknowledged that, whatever territory in the west is with Azad Kashmir, it is due to the tribesmen.'[40]

If Ian Stephens was the commanding newspaper editor at the time of the transfer of power, for the next generation, Frank Moraes took that role. He was born in Bombay in 1907, educated at Catholic schools in India and then at Oxford University, and in 1950 he became the first Indian editor of the *Times of India*. Frank Moraes had been an intimate friend of Margaret Bourke-White. Whether it was her account of Baramulla that prompted him to visit the town is a detail lost to history. But when in the spring of 1958, Frank Moraes travelled in Kashmir to gather material for a series of substantial articles about political integration and social development, one was entitled: 'The Burning of Baramulla'.[41] He recalled how ten years earlier 'tribal raiders, aided and abetted by Pakistan, poured into this small township . . . and for nearly a week indulged in an orgy of burning, pillage, looting, rape, and murder'. Moraes came across 'few vestiges of those days of horror' when he visited what he found to be a 'sleepy township'. He saw the memorial to Maqbool Sherwani, and briefly reprised his tale. But he spent most of his few hours in Baramulla at the convent and hospital, piecing together the story of the attack on the mission from three nuns who had lived through the incident—one Italian, another German and the third Spanish. 'In my day, I have seen some violence, particularly as a war correspondent in the last war,' Moraes wrote. 'But there was something strangely and deeply moving in the accounts of these three women who ten years after their nightmare experiences could retail them placidly to a stranger and recount some of them with even a trace of whimsical humour.'

Frank Moraes's account of the attack on the mission, based solely on the testimony of the nuns, is powerfully written. It is, for the most part, a record of their memories, made more vivid in its rendition by the simple, unadorned effectiveness of the writing, and the evident grace and forgiveness of Moraes's informants. But he also had a political message to deliver—part of which he placed in the words of one of the sisters. 'As they looted and attacked us, the raiders kept shouting "Pakistan has come", said the Italian nun. I only knew that the devil had come.' Moraes topped and tailed his article with references to the UN Security Council's reluctance to describe the lashkar's invasion of Kashmir as

aggression. 'The nuns are still [in Baramulla] and presumably can be questioned by any U.N. representative,' his article concluded. 'And yet the Security Council, shutting its eyes to facts such as these, complacently continues in refusing to admit that there was any aggression in Kashmir!'

The following year, an All India Radio team followed in Frank Moraes's footsteps. They spoke, almost certainly, to the same three nuns at the Baramulla mission, and also to Monsignor Shanks in Srinagar. The resulting programme was broadcast on 26 October 1958, the eve of the eleventh anniversary of the attack on the mission. It formed the basis of a substantial illustrated article in a magazine published by the Indian ministry of information and broadcasting.[42] Much of the article was a recitation of the survivors' recollections of the attack. But the context offered was one of Pakistan-instigated terror. The programme was broadcast to mark the anniversary of the attack 'when Pakistani irregulars aided by the Government of Pakistan put this predominantly Muslim town to fire and sword'. The four foreign survivors had 'lifted the veil on a brutal tragedy which invaders from Pakistan perpetuated upon an innocent and peace-loving people'. The 'peace-loving people' themselves, the people of Kashmir, were not given a voice in the article.

The author of this article also recited what has come to be a standard constituent of partisan Indian accounts of the attack on Baramulla. 'According to one account,' the article stated, 'out of its nearly fourteen thousand inhabitants, only one thousand survived.' The source of this assertion, with its clear implication that more than 90 per cent of Baramulla's residents were killed by the lashkar, was a report by Robert Trumbull of the *New York Times*. After visiting Baramulla in the wake of its capture by Indian troops, he wrote: 'Today, twenty-four hours after the Indian Army entered Baramula, only 1,000 were left of a normal population of about 14,000. These still were huddled fearfully in the empty wrecks of their homes.'[43] Trumbull was not saying that all but 1,000 of Baramulla's pre-invasion population had been killed. The figures he cited were a reflection of the exodus from the town as people sought sanctuary elsewhere, rather than of an all-out massacre. Trumbull in the same article offered a hearsay figure for casualties in Baramulla. 'Surviving residents estimate that 3,000 of their fellow townsmen . . . were slain,' he reported—still a shocking figure, and indeed a considerably higher estimate than other accounts.

Trumbull's report from Baramulla featured prominently in the Indian government's March 1948 White Paper on Jammu and Kashmir, a ninety-page compendium of news articles, extracts from official

documents and communications, and personal testimony (some from captured tribesmen and their allies), intended to buttress both India's claim to the former princely state and its assertion that Pakistan was the aggressor. This was an impressive, if selective, presentation of evidence that supported the Indian case. Although consisting mainly of official documents, it included snippets not only from the *New York Times*, but also from Sydney Smith's reports in the *Daily Express*, and from *The Times*, the *Observer*, the *Times of India* and the *Hindustan Times*, along with, somewhat cheekily, some Pakistani titles, including *Dawn*. For many writers on Kashmir over the years, the white paper has served as primary source material. It has also formed the basis of many diplomatic speeches and representations which in turn made reference to Baramulla, the loss of life there, and the desecration of the convent and hospital. The reportage the White Paper included has been repeatedly recycled, while the articles it chose not to include have been largely overlooked. The White Paper quoted Trumbull accurately, citing both his sets of figures and also his brief account of the attack on the mission, but others relying on it were sometimes misleadingly selective. V.P. Menon, the senior Indian civil servant responsible for signing up the princely states to join India, was paraphrasing Trumbull for his own purposes when he declared: 'When the Indian troops entered [Baramulla] they found that it had been stripped by the tribesmen of its wealth and its women. Out of a normal population of 14,000 only one thousand were left.'[44] The attempt to suggest that the tribesmen had decimated Baramulla's population, and to cite a foreign correspondent perceived as neutral was a propagandistic remoulding of Trumbull's journalism.

The extent of the devastation at Baramulla, however, was beyond question. There can be arguments about the number of lives lost, and about the exact extent of the destruction, but no doubt about the brutality of the attack. From the moment of the Indian army's entry into Baramulla, the violence the town had witnessed at the hands of the invading forces was publicised and recited as evidence of their—and their instigators'—cruelty and callousness towards Kashmir and its people. The attack on the mission was highlighted above all other aspects of the town's plight. The victims were not Kashmiris and were clearly in no way party to the conflict. The fate that befell them was well attested. As foreigners, their ordeal more readily attracted international censure as well as condemnation in Kashmir and elsewhere in India. From the initial visits to Baramulla of India's prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and his key Kashmiri ally, Sheikh Abdullah, the plight of the Catholic mission was

presented as an emblem of the rapaciousness of Pakistan's desire for Kashmir. References to 'the sack of Baramulla', 'the horrors of Baramulla' and 'the rape of Baramulla' became a common refrain.

When Sheikh Abdullah delivered the opening address to the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly in November 1951, he made specific reference to the attack on St Joseph's:

> It was not an ordinary type of invasion, inasmuch as no canons of warfare were observed. The tribesmen who attacked the State in thousands, killed, burned, looted and destroyed whatever came their way and in this savagery no section of the people could escape. Even the nuns and nurses of a Catholic Mission were either killed or brutally mistreated.[45]

Half a century on from the attack, Sheikh Abdullah's son and political heir Farooq Abdullah told me how he remembered first hearing of the violence at Baramulla. 'Suddenly we realised we were being invaded. We would hear just these stories that they have reached Baramulla and they have done all sorts of things at Baramulla. We were frightened as kids because of Hitler. When our mother had to put us to bed, she used to say: Hitler is coming. This time we saw [a] real Hitler.' His contemporary Karan Singh, then Kashmir's crown prince, shared similar memories of the raid. 'This was being done by tribesmen. They were people from outside. They came in plundering and killing and raping, including the convent at Baramulla. It was a terrible time.' The association of the forces from Pakistan with terror and plunder has proved powerful. It is perhaps an irony that even when talking of terror in Kashmir, those Kashmiris who suffered have had to relinquish centre stage to outsiders.

'I Think They'll Try Again'

A handful of the nuns gathered at the gates to see the buses go by, along with a posse of student nurses and a few other onlookers. The road had been closed to traffic all morning. Sister Elaine Nazareth, the sister superior at St Joseph's, was at work in the convent. It was a time of prayer—Pope John Paul had died a few days earlier. She heard the sirens. 'I ran up to the rooms and I saw it pass.' The date was Thursday, 7 April 2005. The first bus service in almost sixty years between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, the capitals of divided Kashmir, passed by the Baramulla convent hospital. The boundary wall had been spruced up in preparation for the inaugural journey. The army had painted it an unattractive cement colour, and to the dismay of the sisters had done little by way of preparation. 'They painted over the moss and everything,' Sister Elaine told me censoriously. The two buses wended their way along the Jhelum Valley road towards Muzaffarabad, a distance of a little over a hundred miles. In the early afternoon, the nineteen Kashmiris travelling from Srinagar dismounted, and made their way by foot across a refurbished and renamed bridge, the Aman Setu or peace bridge, which straddles the line of control and into Pakistan Kashmir. The manner of the crossing was almost a parable on India–Pakistan relations: the peace bridge could not take the weight of fully laden buses.

On the eve of the inaugural journey, armed separatists had staged a spectacular attack on the Tourist Reception Centre in Srinagar, the building where the first busload of passengers had gathered. Live pictures were relayed on India's TV news channels. It seemed that the bus service had been thrown off course even before the first journey had started. But the militants had miscalculated. Almost all the passengers still boarded the next morning, excited to see relatives they had not embraced for decades. Sonia Gandhi, the latest incarnation of India's premier political dynasty, flagged off the vehicles. The reopening of a route across Kashmir's ceasefire line was an enormously popular move, and by seeking

to derail the initiative, the militants set themselves against the weight of Kashmiri opinion.

A bus service linking divided Kashmir, and allowing families separated for generations to meet each other, was a tangible, positive outcome of a thaw in relations between India and Pakistan. But it also gave rise to great expectations—which were not immediately met. In some ways, the tone of the Kashmir dispute has changed substantially in the first few years of the new century. Pakistan has talked about the circumstances in which it might drop its claim to Kashmir, and has moved away from its previous emphasis on implementing old United Nations resolutions and holding a plebiscite. India has held talks with moderate Kashmiri separatists, and has established discrete and indirect channels of communication with some of the hardliners and armed groups. The elected government of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir has more legitimacy in the eyes of Kashmiris than any for a generation. Some separatist leaders have said aloud what many Kashmiris believe, that whatever the merits of the cause, the insurgency has done nothing but fill graveyards. The level of violence has abated, and Srinagar—never a poor city when compared to others in north India—appears to be thriving. But for a new generation of Kashmiris, who have no recall of times before the present insurgency started in 1989, this all sounds rather hollow. Kashmir continues to be a base for hundreds of thousands of Indian security forces. It's still rare for more than a day or two to go by in the Valley without a violent death. And Kashmir still feels constrained and hemmed in by a dispute which not only remains unresolved but for which there is no road map pointing towards a solution. The Kashmir Valley is weary of conflict, but can see no early sign of peace.

The contours of the Kashmir conflict have changed markedly since 1947. The insurgency that erupted in 1989 had its roots in the Kashmir Valley, and was nurtured by a profound sense of grievance and powerlessness. Whatever help and involvement the armed separatist movement has secured from outside, it was—and to a considerable extent remains—a Kashmiri cause. In that way, the current conflict is very different from the violence that marked the inception of the Kashmir crisis towards the end of 1947. But so much else remains locked in the past. The competing claims to Kashmir, of course, date from that time, and the intellectual armoury of Indian and Pakistani diplomacy has changed little in the intervening decades. Pakistan's support for irregular armed forces over which it has some influence but far from complete control has been a recurring theme. So has India's deployment of huge numbers

of security forces in the Kashmir Valley, and its reluctance, whatever the official rhetoric, to encourage civil society and to loosen the binds by which it has restrained and secured Kashmir. Pakistan still believes that Kashmiris instinctively yearn to be part of Pakistan. Many in India reckon that the Kashmir conflict has been started and stoked by Pakistan, and that if Islamabad stops encouraging the insurgents then the trouble will end. Part of the problem in achieving a resolution of the Kashmir issue is the need, first, to puncture these misconceptions.

Sheikh Abdullah proved to be much more effective as a nationalist leader, and a mobiliser of Kashmiri opinion, than as a politician or statesman. He was, without question, the dominant figure in Kashmir from the political awakening of the 1930s until his death in 1982. In the early years of his administration, he managed to secure a formal end to the Dogra monarchy. Of still greater importance, he implemented land reforms probably more radical than anywhere else in independent India which broke the economic and political power of Jammu and Kashmir's (mainly non-Muslim) large landlords. It changed the face of the Kashmir countryside, and earned Sheikh Abdullah the lasting loyalty of a previously impoverished peasantry and rural labour force in the Valley. But while Sheikh Abdullah had come to power on a platform of opposition to feudal privilege, his own style of politics was also in large part based on patronage and personal loyalty. He was a populist more than a democrat. He was increasingly at odds with his old friend, Jawaharlal Nehru, in Delhi, and with some of Nehru's key ministers. The Indian government became concerned that Sheikh Abdullah was distancing himself from the decision to accede to India, and was talking up the option of self-governance or independence. In August 1953, the youthful Karan Singh, the would-be maharaja who had taken on the role of Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional head of state, dismissed Sheikh Abdullah from his post as prime minister, and ordered his arrest. The Sher-e-Kashmir was replaced by his one-time deputy, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, and his party, the National Conference, split into feuding factions. Sheikh Abdullah spent most of the next twenty-two years in detention.[1]

The politicians who followed in Sheikh Abdullah's footsteps, a rather undistinguished bunch, depended on Delhi's support and on dubious elections. So it is hardly surprising that they did little to resist the state's increasing incorporation into the Indian Union. The special privileges granted to Kashmir in the early 1950s in Article 370 of the Indian Constitution—notably that defence, foreign affairs and communications were the only areas under the jurisdiction of the Indian government—

became eroded. Over time, Jammu and Kashmir's prime minister became a chief minister, as in other states; the role of head of state was downgraded to that of a Delhi-appointed Governor; the Indian government took upon itself powers to dismiss the Jammu and Kashmir state government; and many legal, legislative and other privileges were dismantled. The issue of Kashmir's special status continues to resound in Srinagar, where many politicians want the initial dispensation to be restored, and in Delhi, where Hindu nationalists want the last emblems of such privileges to be revoked, arguing that Muslim-majority Kashmir should have the same status as every other corner of India.

In 1965, taking advantage of political unrest in the Kashmir Valley, Pakistan launched 'Operation Gibraltar'. Several thousand armed men were sent into Kashmir. Few of them were from the Valley, and the local response was tepid. If the Pakistan authorities had hoped to spark off a popular uprising against Indian rule, they were disappointed. The analogies with 1947 are striking. The Pakistan military sent over irregular forces into Kashmir—the local people did not rally to the insurgents' standard—and the outcome was war between India and Pakistan. It was a short war, with India quickly gaining the upper hand, and with little lasting impact on Kashmir. Six years later, the two South Asian neighbours were at war again. Indian troops were deployed in force in support of the secessionist movement in Bengali-speaking East Pakistan, and so acted as midwife for the creation of the new nation of Bangladesh. It was a brutal conflict, with heavy loss of civilian life and appalling atrocities. Pakistan lost more than half its population to the new nation and the argument that Jinnah had rehearsed to achieve Partition, that religion is a sufficient basis for nationhood, was tarnished by the Bangladeshis' fight for a national identity defined by language and culture. Pakistan has not forgotten this humiliation at India's hands.

Although Kashmir was neither the cause nor the main theatre of the 1971 conflict, the scale of the Indian victory had important consequences there. The Shimla accord negotiated the following year saw a defeated Pakistan accept that Kashmir was a bilateral issue to be settled between India and Pakistan. The old ceasefire line was redesignated the line of control. And ever since, India has insisted that the United Nations and the international community have no business seeking to interfere in Kashmir. Indian officials have stated that at the Shimla talks, India's prime minister, Indira Gandhi, secured a private assurance from Pakistan's Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that he would in time

accept the line of control as the international border, so abandoning Pakistan's claim to the Kashmir Valley.[2] This 'stay as we are' solution has been advocated privately by India from 1948 onwards. The Shimla deal was probably the best chance to secure Pakistan's acceptance. Whatever Bhutto may have said, it never happened.

A few years later, an ageing and prison-weary Sheikh Abdullah did a deal with Mrs Gandhi. He dropped talk of self-government or a plebiscite and signed up to an understanding which promised little in the way of autonomy. In return, he was brought back in from the cold and appointed the state's chief minister. In 1977, by this time no longer in favour with Mrs Gandhi and her Congress party, he won an emphatic victory in state elections. Of all Kashmir's exercises in state elections in India's first thirty years of independence, the 1977 polls were by far the most untainted. Five years later the Sher-e-Kashmir died, and crowds beyond number thronged Srinagar for his funeral. But his elder son and political successor, Farooq Abdullah, who had little tutelage in Kashmir's politics, lacked his father's following and authority. He was dismissed from office by Delhi, then two years later concluded a humbling deal with a new Indian prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi—another uncomfortable coming together of political dynasties—which put him back in office as chief minister. This perceived kowtowing to Delhi was not popular in the Valley. In 1987 state elections, a hastily assembled anti-Delhi alliance, the Muslim United Front, appeared poised to make a big dent in the support for Farooq Abdullah and his National Conference. Popular sentiment was so strong that the voting could not be rigged. But the counting was, it seems, and so too was the declaration of results. In the eyes of its critics, the National Conference achieved a victory for which Kashmir is still paying the price. If there was any spur to the start of the separatist insurgency in 1989, it was the anger over the flawed elections staged two years earlier.

Kashmiris had no martial tradition, and popular politics in the Valley only stretched back to the 1930s. They were novices at insurrection. But encouraged by the changing world map—everything from the unravelling of Moscow's empire, the nearby new nations of former Soviet Central Asia, and the Palestinian 'intifada', to the tenacious insurgencies in Sri Lanka and Indian Punjab—aspirations for self-determination seemed achievable. And best achievable through armed struggle. Pakistan, or at least key sections of the establishment, was keen to encourage armed separatism across the line of control. The trickle of young Kashmiris

crossing over to seek military training coincided with the crowning achievement of Pakistan's intelligence service in working with Islamic radicals to evict the Soviet Union from Afghanistan.

The instigators of the insurgency in Kashmir were members of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, which sought independence for the former princely state. Some of their leading activists returned from training camps and, in the second half of 1989, conducted sabotage attacks and assassinations of those they regarded as agents of Indian rule and their collaborators. Like a spark among kindling, the JKLF set Srinagar alight—and the Indian response fanned the flames. Huge anti-India street protests often ended in rioting, and in a heavy-handed military response, in which sometimes dozens of demonstrators were killed. The fury of the Indian attempts to repress the insurgency, the resort to torture and to vicious security crackdowns prompted more young Kashmiri men to slip silently across the line of control and join the armed groups.

The JKLF lost hundreds of its leading activists and fighters in the first few years of the insurgency. It suffered another blow. Pakistan increasingly directed its resources and support to another group, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, which—unlike the secular-minded JKLF—espoused an explicitly Islamic identity, and sought Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. Several times over the years, Pakistan has put its hand on the scales and shifted the balance among armed Kashmiri groups. By 1994, the JKLF had moved away from armed activity, and in the next few years, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen faced a serious challenge from 'renegade' groups, armed separatists who were persuaded or coerced by the Indian authorities to change sides and fight their former allies. The creation of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in 1993 gave an institutional face to the moderate separatist groups. India made little use of this opportunity, as it pursued a military solution to separatism and then, after several years of ruling Jammu and Kashmir directly from Delhi, sought to reinstate Farooq Abdullah, the Sher-e-Kashmir's son, as a pro-India state chief minister.

A new factor in the conflict came with Pakistan's increasing support for jihadi groups with links to the Taliban in Afghanistan. Their fighters were mainly non-Kashmiris who brought to the Valley a single-mindedness, a ruthlessness and an advocacy of what many would see as Islamic fundamentalism which had hitherto been largely absent. Armed groups such as Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen became the main standard-bearers of the armed Kashmiri cause. Many in the Valley had become wearied by the violence, and the

cycle of intimidation and extortion involving both sides in the conflict. Among those who supported 'azaadi' or Kashmiri freedom, a certain gratitude to the 'guest militants', as they were known, for supporting the Kashmiri cause was often counterbalanced by a distaste for their ideology and for their style of operation. But a series of high profile suicide-style attacks by these jihadi groups demonstrated the considerable threat they posed to the Indian security forces, and their ability both to bludgeon other strands of Kashmiri opinion and to unsettle any diplomatic moves towards a settlement.

The perpetually troubled relations between India and Pakistan appeared to take a marked turn for the better in February 1999, when India's first Hindu nationalist prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, took his seat on the inaugural journey of a bus service between Delhi and Lahore. While in Pakistan, he visited the Minar-e-Pakistan, the monument in Lahore at the site of the meeting of Jinnah's Muslim League at which its famous 'Pakistan' resolution was adopted seven years before Partition. It was seen as a hugely symbolic act of acceptance and reconciliation. The two prime ministers gave an impetus to what has been called 'back channel' diplomacy, contacts between informal emissaries of the two governments, to seek to inject new thinking into the search for a settlement in Kashmir. Yet at the time Vajpayee was talking to Pakistan's prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's army was already planning a new military campaign against India. Later that year, Pakistani troops and armed jihadi groups crossed the line of control in a barren area near Kargil, just east of the Valley in Ladakh, and took up mountain-top positions. The Indian army didn't notice for quite a while. When they did, fighting erupted between the two armies in what amounted to an undeclared war. The surreptitious nature of the incursion, and the involvement of jihadi groups which regarded themselves as in the tradition of the lashkar, harked back strongly to the events of 1947.[3] Whatever the intended purpose of the Kargil incursion, it did not succeed. Both sides suffered several hundred fatalities before, under intense American pressure, Nawaz Sharif pulled back Pakistan's forces. The army and its allies in Pakistan's intelligence service did not like losing face in this way, and within months Nawaz Sharif had been overthrown by General Pervez Musharraf, the army chief most commentators believe was responsible for the Kargil operation.

The incursion in Kargil propelled Indian public opinion, and sentiment among its normally politically quiescent army officer corps, towards a hawkish response. There was a lot of talk of teaching Pakistan

a lesson. In the months after Kargil, the Indian government came under intense pressure—which again President Clinton did much to restrain—to authorise an attack on what the armed services believed to be militant camps in Pakistan Kashmir. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attack in New York, tension again soared between Delhi and Islamabad. Jihadi groups fighting in Kashmir staged daring attacks first on the state Assembly building in Srinagar, and then on India's Parliament building in the heart of Delhi. Once again, American pressure was exerted to dissuade the Indian government from a military response. And Pakistan's President Musharraf outlawed some of the Islamic radical groups held responsible for the attacks. The assassination attempts and vitriolic criticism which jihadi groups directed at President Musharraf indicated that his measures had real impact. But many in India's corridors of power were not entirely convinced, expressing concern that the more hardline wing of Pakistan's army and intelligence service would find ways of sustaining the armed separatists. Musharraf's willingness to voice new thoughts and approaches to the Kashmir issue helped to reduce tension, and paved the way for the trans-Kashmir bus service. But the violence has not ended, and neither an internal settlement, nor an understanding between India and Pakistan on Kashmir, has been achieved, or indeed attempted with any sustained zeal. As ever, much of the real diplomacy has been conducted away from public view, and there has been some preparing of the ground for the compromises that all sides will have to make to achieve peace and political stability in Kashmir, but the process has been haphazard and slow.

The nuclear tests which both India and Pakistan conducted in 1998 emphasised the danger to both regional and global security of allowing the Kashmir dispute to fester. Even so, the Kashmir crisis, the issues that lie behind the conflict, and the parameters of a possible solution have never attracted the diplomatic and public attention that has been accorded to the other key flashpoints concerning radical Islam: Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq. That's partly because India, the status quo power in the Kashmir Valley, has discouraged and deflected international attention. And partly because Kashmir itself has seemed remote and isolated, complex and cut off, and has never in recent years produced a leader who has captured global (or indeed regional) attention.

The prism through which the international community sees the Kashmir issue is also, by and large, not the Kashmiri vantage point. The news reporting comes from Kashmir, the analysis usually from elsewhere. It is still difficult to find any authoritative book on contemporary Kashmir written by a Kashmiri Muslim.[4] Amid the hundreds of titles in English

written about Kashmir—scholarly, journalistic, polemical, partisan—the outside perspective prevails. And even among Kashmiri writers, the Muslim majority voice is sometimes barely audible. Kashmiris often complain that they have no agency over their own affairs. Certainly they have had little direct agency in how the Kashmir conflict is described to the world.

The town of Baramulla has never recovered from 1947. The buildings were rebuilt but not its economy. The conspicuous Sikh minority, and the even more conspicuous gurdwara, bestow an air of pluralism absent in any other Kashmiri town outside Srinagar. But its wealth depended on markets in what became Pakistan Punjab and its position astride what was then the only all-weather road into Kashmir and on a river which also served as a commercial artery. 'A prosperous town of about sixteen thousand souls,' in the description of one of Baramulla's most famous sons, Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, 'it was the biggest town in the Valley—apart from Srinagar city. Centre of fruit and timber industry, it boasted of the only factories outside Srinagar. Since late thirties, it was fast developing as a tourist resort.'[5] Ever since 1947, the road that once gave Baramulla its purpose and much of its prosperity has led nowhere. 'Baramulla was a trade centre,' a retired local schoolteacher told me wistfully, 'and now it is a poor town.' If the buses are joined by trucks taking apples, walnuts and wood to market in Rawalpindi and beyond, that could change. But at the moment, perhaps the best business opportunities in Baramulla are contracts for supplies and services to the Indian army.

Tom Dykes junior hoped and planned to go back to Baramulla one day to pay homage at his parents' graves. Neither he nor his brothers have ever returned. But the battle for Kashmir that claimed the lives of his parents also frustrated their eldest son's desire to visit their resting place. After 1989, only the intrepid or the ill-informed among foreign travellers made their way to Srinagar. The Kashmir Valley had become too dangerous a place for a personal pilgrimage. Tom simply wanted to see where his Mum and Dad died and to pay the respects he was too young to offer at the time. He died in October 2003 with his wish unfulfilled.

The events of 1947 do not explain the current conflict, nor do they even begin to offer a solution. Both India and Pakistan have been too insistent on harking back to events of sixty years ago, as if an assertion that they were in the right at that time justifies their subsequent actions. A necessary step to resolving any crisis, however, is gaining an understanding of how it started. Not to indulge in recriminations, but to appreciate the sequence of actions, and the jumble of claims and grievances, that tangle

and snag moves towards compromise. If ever there could be an agreed narrative of Kashmir's modern history, other forms of accord should not be far away.

The main purpose of this study has been to illuminate the origins of the Kashmir crisis by retrieving the personal stories of those who lived through the events of October and November 1947. The facts and perspectives unravelled through this research challenge the official narratives of both India and Pakistan about the genesis of the Kashmir conflict. In particular, they question Pakistan's often-stated denial of instigating or organising the lashkar's invasion of the Kashmir Valley, and they cast doubt on the Indian account of Kashmir's accession.

Pakistan's new government took a decision in its first few weeks to support military intervention in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir in an attempt to prise territory away from the maharaja, and from India. There were two aspects to Pakistan's somewhat confused initiative. Sections within the government and the armed forces decided to provide support to the insurgency already under way against the maharaja in and around Poonch. This, in Pakistan's terms, worked well. The insurgents managed to take control of a significant swathe of territory along the left bank of the Jhelum river, to the east of Pakistan's Punjab province, which neither the maharaja nor the Indian army was able to reclaim. This now forms the most populous area of Azad Kashmir, Pakistan's part of the former princely state. The other aspect, Pakistan's support for an invasion of the Kashmir Valley, was nothing like as successful. The insurgency here was not local, so the Pakistan authorities had to make much greater use of fighters from the Frontier, either from the neighbouring Hazara region or tribesmen from the mountains bordering Afghanistan. There was limited local support for the invaders, and the looting and indiscipline of the tribal fighters ensured that whatever goodwill there was among Valley Kashmiris for the attackers quickly faded away.

The decision to involve large numbers of jihad-minded tribal fighters from Waziristan was not so much a matter of policy as an extempore initiative. The tribesmen were keen to fight. The authorities in the North West Frontier Province, along with key figures such as Khurshid Anwar, made much greater use of the tribal lashkar than other Pakistani instigators of the Kashmir policy had envisaged. The disorganisation to which the lashkar was prone diminished the tribal fighters' effectiveness as an invading force. Attempts to instil greater military purpose and the acute divisions within the invading force, delayed their advance on Srinagar. If they had pressed on quickly from Baramulla, the Pakistani forces would

very probably have been able to capture the airstrip outside Srinagar and so choke off the Indian airlift of troops into the Kashmir Valley. Many army veterans and commentators, Indian and Pakistani, have argued that in this event, the lashkar would have captured Srinagar, and the Kashmir Valley would today be part of Pakistan. That's a bold assumption. Indian troops could still have been airlifted into Jammu, and while they would then have faced an arduous road journey across the Banihal pass into the Valley—an almost impossible journey during winter—India would still have been in a position to put up a fight for Kashmir. And the entry of the lashkar into Srinagar would probably have been resisted strongly by local people, not least the National Conference's volunteer militia. If the tribal fighters had treated the civilian population in Srinagar with the brutality witnessed in Baramulla, both Indian and international opinion may well have demanded redressal. It is probable that the only way that Srinagar could have been held by Pakistan is if an initial advance by the lashkar had then been consolidated by the deployment of thousands of Pakistani troops.

Whatever misgivings some of Pakistan's leaders may have had about the tribal invasion of the Kashmir Valley, once the Indian airlift had begun they had little option but to provide support to the tribal fighters. That was the only way other than a full-scale army mobilisation to challenge India's entry into Kashmir. Pakistan's founder and leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah acquiesced in increased financial and logistical assistance to the lashkar and the deployment of more Pakistan army officers in their support. That succeeded in limiting India's advance in the final weeks of 1947. And when, the following summer, it seemed that Indian forces in the former princely state were poised to push further west towards Pakistan Punjab, the government in Karachi opted to send in its army. The result was close to stalemate. The war ended with Kashmir partitioned, as it has been ever since.

India's claim to Kashmir rests on two foundations: that the key representatives of old and new Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, both (at the time) supported Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India; and that Indian troops were sent to Srinagar only after Kashmir had become part of India. The latter point is clouded by the indications that the most detailed official account of Kashmir's accession, by the Indian civil servant who secured the maharaja's signature, V.P. Menon, is misleading. Although there can be no certainty, the likelihood is that the maharaja only signed the instrument of accession a few hours after Indian troops started arriving at the Srinagar airfield.

This is to dwell on the geopolitics of the Kashmir dispute. One of the aims of this study has been to redress the heavy emphasis on Kashmir as territory disputed between India and Pakistan, and to describe the violence of late 1947 as it was experienced by those who lived through it. Kashmiris and outsiders; fighters and civilians; politicians and citizens. The book revolves around one date: 27 October 1947. The day that Lord Mountbatten accepted Kashmir's accession to India—the day that the Indian army began its airlift into Kashmir—and the day that Pakistani tribesmen ransacked St Joseph's convent and hospital at Baramulla. It is a date privileged by the high politics of the Kashmir dispute but explored and discussed through the stories of those who were caught up in the events more than those who were directing them.

Social history is about people. So too is good reporting. And the most obvious lasting answer to the Kashmir dispute is to heed the voices of the people of Kashmir, and to allow them to decide their own destiny. The national interests of India and Pakistan—and particularly of India, the nation in power in the Kashmir Valley—will determine whether, when and how this is done.

End Notes

Chapter 1: An Italian in Kashmir

1. The argument that Partition violence was organised and purposeful rather than spontaneous acts of vengeance is made forcefully in Paul R. Brass, *Forms of Collective Violence: Riots, Pogroms, and Genocide in Modern India*, Gurgaon, 2006.

2. Letter, Biddy Dykes to Muriel Gambs, 17 October [1947], made available to me by Biddy's eldest son, the late Tom Dykes junior.

3. Pamela Barretto, *Looking Back after 50 Years*, privately printed in Australia, 1997, 18pp.

4. *History of Operations in Jammu and Kashmir, 1947–48*, Indian Defence Ministry, Delhi, 1987, pp. 388–90, republishes the operational instruction for the start of the airlift.

5. *Daily Express*, 10 and 11 November 1947.

6. *Daily Express*, 10 November 1947.

7. Entry in Father George Shanks's diary on pages for 13–14 April .

Chapter 2: Caught in the Middle

1. The discrepancy between the frequent portrayal of kashmiriyat as eliding over the differences between Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus, and the quite different reality, is discussed in two pioneering academic studies, Chitralekha Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging: Islam, regional identity, and the making of Kashmir*, Delhi, 2003, and Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, rights, and the history of Kashmir*, Delhi, 2004.

2. Asiya Andrabi, leader of the separatist Kashmiri women's group Dukhtaran-e-Millat, has declared: 'I don't believe in Kashmiriyat. I don't believe in nationalism. I believe there are just two nations—Muslims and non-Muslims.' *Outlook*, Delhi, 14 August 2006.

3. Alexander Evans, 'A departure from history: Kashmiri Pandits, 1990–2001', *Contemporary South Asia*, 2002, pp. 19–37.

4. Michael Brecher, *The Struggle for Kashmir*, New York, 1953, p. 4.

5. Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar, 1846–1947: A Study in Socio-cultural Change*, Srinagar, 2007, pp. 34–37.

6. The Kashmir Study Group based in New York published in 2005 a revised edition of its prospectus for Kashmir's future, *Kashmir: A Way Forward*. This used official census data to estimate the population of the various parts of the former princely state as of 2001. Of the Indian-controlled areas, it put the population of the Kashmir Valley at 5.4 million, of Jammu at 4.4 million and of Ladakh at 0.2 million. Of Pakistan's portion of Kashmir, it estimated the population of Azad Kashmir at 3.2 million and of the Northern Areas at 0.9 million. That's a total of 14.2 million, as against 4.02 million in the last pre-independence census in 1941.

7. Niaz Naik interviewed in Islamabad, 24 January 2000. Although these substantive discussions on Kashmir got nowhere, the channel of communication established proved of value in helping to resolve the Kargil conflict of 1999.

8. Typescript memoirs of Sir James Acheson, f. 52. Acheson was the British Resident in Kashmir, 1943–45. I am grateful to his grandson, Nigel Acheson, for sending me extracts from these unpublished memoirs, which are held in the India Office Records at the British Library.

9. The development of the press in Kashmir is discussed in Khan, *History of Srinagar*, pp. 193–205.

10. Zutshi, *Languages of Belonging*, pp. 302–08. Kashmiri politics in the 1940s is also discussed in Ian Copland, 'The Abdullah Factor: Kashmiri Muslims and the crisis of 1947', in D.A. Low (ed.), *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan*, London, 1991.

11. A brief account of the 'Mr A' case can be found in Ian Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire, 1917–1947*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 60.

12. *Hindustan Times*, 14 October 1947. A week later, Kashmir's Prime Minister, M.C. Mahajan, was still talking about Kashmir's goal of being 'the Switzerland of the Eastern Hemisphere'—*Times of India*, 21 October 1947.

13. LP&S/13/1845b, ff.213–19, India Office Records, British Library. The conversation took place in Lahore on 1 November 1947.

14. LP&S/13/1845b, ff.566–68. Scott added that Kashmiris 'realise that a hostile Pakistan could seriously disrupt Kashmir's economy'.

15. Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*, Harvard, 2003, pp. 59–60. In 1997, Sheikh Abdullah's son, Farooq Abdullah—then chief minister of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir—told me his father had aspired to Kashmir being 'a kind of Switzerland'. He added that whatever the views his father had once held, an independent Kashmir 'was simply not possible any more . . . [and] would lead to massacres the like of which we did not see even in 47'.

16. Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight for Freedom*, Vol. 1, Lahore, 1977, pp. 617–38, provides a detailed and highly personal account of Jinnah's visit to the Kashmir Valley.

17. Ian Copland, 'The Abdullah Factor', pp. 222–23. The 'ripe fruit' quote appears in Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan*, London, 1967, p. 297—the author was the first secretary-general of the Pakistan government. There is a brief discussion of the contrasting attitudes of Congress and the Muslim League to the princely states, and the reasons why Jinnah was more willing to contemplate their independence, in Hasan Zaheer, *The Times and Trial of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy 1951: The First Coup Attempt in Pakistan*, Karachi, 1998, pp. 54–5.

18. *Hindustan Times*, 28 October 1947.

19. L.P. Sen, *Slender Was the Thread: Kashmir Confrontation, 1947–48*, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 2–3. *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir (1947–48)*, Indian Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, 1987, p. 31.

20. *Statesman*, 28 November 1947.

21. Prem Shankar Jha, *The Origins of a Dispute: Kashmir 1947*, New Delhi, 2003, discusses this issue at length. Jha also publishes as an appendix the remarkable written testimony of Christopher Beaumont, private secretary to the chairman of the Boundary Commission, who severely chastises both his boss, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, and Lord Mountbatten for the circumstances in which Ferozepur in Punjab was allocated to India. Beaumont insists, however, that there was no last minute reallocation in regard to Gurdaspur. Alastair Lamb—*Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute, 1947–1948*, Hertingfordbury, 1997, pp. 84–92—argues that the Gurdaspur award was influenced by Sikh sensitivities and not by the Kashmir issue.

22. Stanley Wolpert, *Nehru: A Tryst with Destiny*, Oxford, 1996, pp. 165, 272. Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten: The Official Biography*, London, 1985, p. 445.

23. Brecher, *Struggle for Kashmir*, p. 54.

24. *The Times*, 6 October 1947. Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*, Cambridge, 2001, p. 36—the figures are based on the reckoning of a British diplomat.

25. *New York Times*, 18 September 1948. The correspondent was Robert Trumbull.

26. *Statesman*, 22 October 1947. *Dawn*, 22 October 1947. Sheikh Abdullah had written to the maharaja days prior to his release to 'assure Your Highness the fullest and loyal support of myself and my organization'—Karan Singh, *Heir Apparent: An Autobiography*, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 81–82.

27. *Dawn*, 15 and 19 October 1947.

28. Zaheer, *Rawalpindi Conspiracy*, p. 87. Margaret Parton, *The Leaf and the Flame*, New York, 1959, pp. 128–31.

29. *The Times*, 10 October 1947.

30. Copland, 'The Abdullah Factor', p. 245. That assertion is supported by Michael Brecher's interviews in the summer of 1951 with about 200 people in the Valley, which led him to conclude that 'the Kashmiris are essentially pro-Kashmir, not pro-India or pro-Pakistan,' but that a clear majority preferred Indian rule to the prospect of accession to Pakistan—Brecher, p. 168.

31. *Hindustan Times*, 20 October 1947. Ajit Bhattacharjea, *Kashmir: The Wounded Valley*, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 127–28.

Chapter 3: 'Wild Bearded Beasts'

1. Abdullah Muntazer interviewed in Islamabad, 25 January 2000. Although the fighting in Kashmir started in autumn 1947, the initial India–Pakistan war is generally dated as 1948, because Pakistani troops were only formally deployed from the spring of 1948. Tribal forces took the lead in the incursion into the Kashmir Valley in October–November 1947, and were also involved in the fighting in 1948. In May 2006, Abdullah Muntazer was working in Lahore as the editor of the English website of Jamaat-ud-Dawa, widely regarded as a front organisation for Lashkar-e-Toiba.

2. Sardar M. Ibrahim Khan, *The Kashmir Saga*, Mirpur, 1990, p. 15.

3. Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans, 550 BC–AD 1957*, Karachi 1983, p. 256.

4. See James W. Spain, *The Pathan Borderland*, The Hague, 1963, p. 210, and the same author's *Pathans of the Latter Day*, Karachi, 1995, p. 115.

5. Recounted in Mukulika Banerjee, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition and Memory in the North West Frontier*, Oxford, 2000. The movement's leader Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan was a political ally of Sheikh Abdullah. Khan and Nehru famously visited Kashmir together in 1940.

6. Spain, *The Pathan Borderland*, p. 204, recounts how the Pakistan government decided, almost immediately on independence, to abandon all army installations in the tribal belt, completing the pull-out by the close of 1947.

7. Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850*, London, 2003, p. 361.

8. *Daily Express*, London, 10 and 11 November 1947. Robert Trumbull, *As I See India*, New York, 1956, pp. 84–89. Margaret Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom*, New York, 1949, p. 203. C.E. Tyndale-Biscoe, *Tyndale-Biscoe of Kashmir: An Autobiography*, London, 1951, p. 271.

9. Akbar S. Ahmed, 'Tribes and States in Central and South Asia', *Asian Affairs*, 1980, p. 157. Alan Warren, *Waziristan, the Faqir of Ipi and the Indian Army: The North West Frontier Revolt of 1936–37*, Oxford, 2000, p. xxv.

10. Ahmed, p. 155. Ahmed suggests that lashkars from more settled Pathan areas, particularly those with irrigated land, were more disciplined, and so more effective in keeping and controlling territory.

11. Warren, pp. 279–80.

12. Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute, 1947–1948*, Hertingfordbury, 1997, p. 121.

13. 'The Revolt in Poonch' written by Richard Symonds on 8 December 1947. DO142/494, British National Archives.

14. 'Let it be Maharajah's rule. It is a lesser evil, if you would like to call

it. It is better than the whole region being on fire'—Sardar Abdul Qayum Khan's interview in the *Times of India*, 27 September 2005.

15. Ibrahim Khan, pp. 71–76.

16. Ibrahim Khan, pp. 99–100.

17. The Fakir of Ipi, Mirza Ali Khan, later advocated 'Pakhtoonistan', a nation state uniting Pathans. He remained a nuisance to the Pakistan authorities, encouraging revolt from his headquarters in a cluster of mountain caves near the Afghan border, until his death in 1960.

18. *Statesman*, 18 October 1947.

19. *New York Herald Tribune,* 25 October 1947.

20. Spain, *Pathan Borderland*, pp. 195, 201. Erland Jansson, *India, Pakistan or Pakhtunistan? The Nationalist Movement in the North-West Frontier Province, 1937–47*, Uppsala, 1981, pp. 121, 165–66. A Pakistani website, www.cybercity-online.net.seanic21.net/pof, asserts that Pir Aminul Hasanat, who became known as 'Pir Sahib of Manki Sharif', was born at Manki Sharif in 1923 and joined the Muslim League in 1945. He gave up active politics in 1955, and died in a road accident in 1960.

21. Personal communication from Andy Roth. There is a brief biographical note about Akbar Khan in Hasan Zaheer, *The Times and Trial of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy 1951: The First Coup Attempt in Pakistan*, Karachi, 1998, pp. xxx–xxxi.

22. Akbar Khan, *Raiders in Kashmir*, Delhi, pp. 8–20.

23. Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*, London, 2002, pp. 234–35.

24. Sirdar Shaukat Hyat Khan recounted in his memoirs *The Nation That Lost Its Soul: Memoirs of a Freedom Fighter*, Lahore, 1995, p. 214, that he reluctantly gave Khurshid Anwar military command of the operation on the urging of Pakistan's finance minister, Ghulam Mohammed, who was related to Anwar. Akbar Khan recalled, p. 17, that Khurshid Anwar emerged out of the meeting convened by the prime minister and confided 'that he was not going to accept any orders from Shaukat Hyat Khan'.

25. Shaukat Hyat Khan, p. 215. Hasan Zaheer, p. 85.

26. Shaukat Hyat Khan, p. 215.

27. The Hazara district, which includes Abbottabad, is the eastern-most part of the North West Frontier Province, bordering Kashmir. It is mainly Hindko and Pashto speaking. The Black Mountain is a mountain range in this area.

28. LP&S/13/1845b, ff.566–68, India Office Records, British Library. *New York Times*, 31 October 1947. Trumbull said the conversation had taken place three weeks earlier, making Jinnah the likely source for his report—published on 9 October—that Pakistan's leaders privately but strongly believed that a long-standing Sikh plan lay behind the communal violence which marred Partition, with the intention 'to strangle this baby at birth'.

29. Diary of Sir George Cunningham, 1947–8, MSS Eur.D 670/6, India

Office Records, British Library. General Sir Douglas Gracey was Pakistan's acting commander-in-chief.

30. *Statesman*, 25 October 1947, 1 November 1947. *Times of India,* 23 October 1947.

31. A.R. Siddiqi, 'Ex-Major General Mohd Akbar Khan, DSO, Talks on Pakistan's First War and First Coup', *Defence Journal,* Karachi, 1985, pp. 1–28. Brigadier Siddiqi himself, the editor of the *Defence Journal*, had no doubt about the role of the chief minister, asserting in an article serving as the introduction to his interview with Akbar Khan: 'Beginning as a tribal foray with the backing of a provincial minister (Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan) and the connivance of the central government under the overall command of one retired Major Khurshid Anwar . . . fighting in Kashmir subsequently developed into an irregular campaign officered by the Pakistani regulars and manned mainly by the tribals and partly by army jawans [soldiers].'

32. DO142/494, British National Archives. The diplomatic memo in question appears to have been written early in December 1947.

33. Jansson, pp. 196–97. For a sour view of Khurshid Anwar from a political rival, see Wali Khan, *Facts Are Facts: The Untold Story of India's Partition*, New Delhi, 1987, pp. 122, 155, and also Banerjee, *Pathan Unarmed*, p. 186.

34. Frank Leeson, *Frontier Legion: With the Khassadars of North Waziristan*, Ferring, 2003, p. 205.

35. Frank Leeson interviewed in Worthing, 20 June 2001.

36. C.B. Duke's report is dated 23 October 1947—DO142/494. British diplomats believed that the Kashmir state forces has been responsible, prior to the invasion, for the 'systematic devastation and expulsion of Muslims along a three mile wide belt on the Pakistan border', LP&S/13/1845c—presumably to create a buffer and to make it easier to detect any infiltration of fighters or military equipment.

37. Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, Yale, 2002, p. 63.

38. *Observer,* 2 November 1947.

39. O.S. Kalkat, *The Far-Flung Frontiers,* New Delhi, 1983, pp. 29–42.

40. *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir (1947–48)*, Indian Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, 1987, p. 18. S.L. Menezes, *Fidelity and Honour: The Indian Army from the 17th Century to the 21st Century*, Delhi, 1999, p. 439. On the other hand, some in the Pakistan army complained loudly that British officers 'were not in sympathy with Pakistan's claim over Kashmir', Zaheer, pp. xvi-xvii.

41. The article in *Dawn*, which was datelined Karachi, 7 December 1947, is contained in the *Government of India White Paper on Jammu & Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1948, pp. 4–5.

42. LP&S/13/1850, ff. 32–35.

43. Krishna Mehta, *Chaos in Kashmir*, Kolkata, 1954, pp. 15–16.

44. A.R. Siddiqi, p. 18.

45. C.B. Duke's report was dated 28–29 October 1947. DO142/494.

46. L.P. Sen, *Slender Was the Thread: Kashmir Confrontation, 1947–48*, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 37–39. Akbar Khan, *Raiders in Kashmir*, p. 36. For a more detailed Indian account of the initial military exchanges, see the Indian Defence Ministry's *History of Operations in Jammu and Kashmir (1947–48)*, pp. 16–24. Khurshid Anwar, in his interview with *Dawn*, said he clashed in Uri with Patiala Sikh soldiers. While the Sikh-ruled princely state of Patiala had sent a small number of troops to Kashmir, there's no firm evidence that they were deployed in forward positions.

47. *Daily Express*, 27 October 1947.

Chapter 4: The Mission

1. William (George) Shanks, 1909–62. Gerard Mallett, 1913–70. Details of the circumstances of their deaths are taken from their personal files in the Central Archive, Mill Hill.

2. The items Mrs Corboy sent me are being deposited at the Mill Hill archive. Father Hormise Nirmal Raj, in 'Unknown Churches, Unknown Martyrs', a typescript study of the church in Kashmir, a copy of which is held in the Mill Hill archive, asserted that Shanks 'had completely broken down mentally since the raid of 1947 [and] was still ill even after becoming the Prefect Apostolic'.

3. Letter, Father George Shanks to Veronica Shanks, 20 September 1947.

4. Quoted by Father Hormise Nirmal Raj, f. 96. This source, f. 99, records just how modest was the number of new conversions: 'One may say nil in Kashmir, and few in Jammu.'

5. I am grateful to Sister Sheila O'Neill, who has been researching the history of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, for providing this extract from the order's records, and much other valuable assistance.

6. Report by Father Shanks, undated typescript 9 ff., Mill Hill archive.

7. The Mill Hill missionaries have since moved from St Joseph's College at Mill Hill, and their archive is being relocated to Freshfield in Merseyside.

8. Father Shanks's diary entry on pages for 9–12 February.

9. Shanks's diary entry on pages for 26–29 January.

10. Shanks diary entry on pages for 22–25 January.

11. Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight for Freedom*, Vol. 2, Lahore, 1979, pp. 903–04.

12. LP&S/13/1850, ff. 38, 111–12, India Office Records, British Library.

13. Shanks diary entry on pages for 1–4 April.

14. Shanks's typescript report, f. 2.

15. James W. Spain, *The Way of the Pathans*, London, 1962, pp. 16–17. Ian Stephens, *Horned Moon: An Account of a Journey through Pakistan, Kashmir and Afghanistan*, London, 1954, pp. 217–18, tells the story of an ornate Kashmiri dagger hilt taken back to Waziristan by a veteran of the raid. Another writer about the Pathans heard accounts of 'numerous items which were clearly

of Kashmiri origin in the houses of Waziri maliks'—Victoria Schofield, *Every Rock, Every Hill: The Plain Tale of the North-West Frontier and Afghanistan*, London, 1984, p. 251.

Chapter 5: The Attack

1. Colonel Dykes's Record of Services, much akin to a log book of army courses and promotions, was obtained from the India Office Records at the British Library with the consent and cooperation of his two elder sons.

2. I am grateful to Alison Spurway, whose mother was a friend of Biddy Dykes in India in the early 1940s, for sending me photographs of Biddy and her family.

3. Mother Teresalina's civil name was Joaquina Zubiri Sanchez. She was born in the Spanish Basque country.

4. From the account of a survivor set down in writing in 2002. This eyewitness later settled in Karachi and asked not to be named. Spellings and punctuation have been amended.

5. 'Autres Details Concernant le 27–10–47 Donnés Par Soeur M. Priscilla', undated typescript, f.1. I am grateful to Father Jim Borst for making available to me copies of this and other documents in his care in Srinagar. My thanks also to Nathalie Monnot for improving my translation from the French.

6. Shanks diary entry on pages for 9–12 April, Mill Hill archive. In this account, Shanks gave Hyat Khan the fictional name of Major Yakoob Khan.

7. Shanks diary entry on pages for 3–6 May. I was told that the nun with the gold tooth was Sister Petra, a Spanish nun latterly living at a convent in south India but unwilling to be interviewed about the attack.

8. LP&S/13/1850, f.119, India Office Records, British Library.

9. Shanks diary entry on pages for 15–20 May.

10. Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari interviewed by telephone to Karachi, 12 May 2003. The incident is also recounted in Sherbaz Khan Mazari, *A Journey to Disillusionment*, Karachi, 1999, pp. 11–12. Mazari believed that his trip to Kashmir was made in the spring of 1948—but if indeed, as he recalled, he reached as far as the vicinity of Baramulla, his journey must have been in late October or early November 1947.

11. George Shanks to Very Rev. T. McLaughlin, 14 November 1947, Mill Hill archive.

12. 'The Sacking of BARAMULLA (Kashmir) by the Tribesmen of PAKISTAN', undated typescript, 3 ff., apparently written by Father Severin de Jong, Mill Hill archive.

13. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight*, Delhi, 1995, p. 357.

14. S.L. Menezes, *Fidelity and Honour: The Indian Army from the 17th Century to the 21st Century*, Delhi, 1999, p. 438. Lt Gen. Stanley Menezes interviewed in London, 12 May 2003.

15. Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army: Wars and Insurrections*, Oxford, 2000, p. 14.

Chapter 6: Signing up to India

1. Karan Singh interviewed in New Delhi, 2 May 1997. For an account of the gossip surrounding his birth, see Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity,* London, 2002, pp. 225–26.

2. Karan Singh, *Heir Apparent: An Autobiography*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 145.

3. Mehr Chand Mahajan, *Looking Back*, Mumbai, 1963, p. 266.

4. Sir George Cunningham's diary, 18 October 1947, MSS Eur.D 670/6, India Office Records, British Library.

5. Karan Singh, *Heir Apparent*, p. 40.

6. The instrument of accession prepared for princely rulers ceded to India only authority over defence, external affairs and communications. It stated: 'Nothing in this Instrument affects the continuance of my sovereignty in and over this State.' However, in practice the situation was much more fluid. 'Gradually the realization dawned on [the rulers] that after the advent of independence they would have no choice but to grant responsible government to their people . . . . Fears regarding the likely attitude of popular ministries were not entirely groundless. Take the case of Kashmir: no sooner had Sheikh Abdullah secured complete power than he insisted that the Maharajah should stay out of the State. It was on Sardar [Patel]'s persuasion that the Maharajah agreed to do so, though reluctantly.' V.P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States*, Hyderabad, 1985, pp. 485–86.

7. Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten,* London, 1951, p. 120. Menon, p. 394.

8. Sir Frank Messervy, 'Kashmir', *Asiatic Review*, January 1949, pp. 469–82. Campbell-Johnson, p. 48.

9. Mahajan, p. 126. See also Prem Shankar Jha, *The Origins of a Dispute: Kashmir 1947*, New Delhi, 2003, pp. 47–49. Nehru's own thoughts are reflected in his letter to Sardar Patel of 27 September 1947—*Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru,* Second Series, Vol. 4, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 263–65.

10. Margaret Parton papers, Division of Special Collections, University of Oregon. I am grateful to the University of Oregon Libraries for permission to quote from these papers.

11. Christopher Snedden, 'What Happened to Muslims in Jammu? Local Identity, "the Massacre" of 1947 and the Roots of the "Kashmir Problem", *South Asia*, 2001, 24/2, pp. 111–34.

12. Mahajan, p. 150.

13. The e-mail was sent to Owen Bennett Jones, a BBC presenter and author of a history of Pakistan, by R.L. Batra's great-grandson, Sudeep Budhiraja. I am grateful to Mr Budhiraja for his help in establishing the provenance of the

maharaja's letter. His copy of this document is not the original, but a photocopy, with filing holes punched in the side. Dr Karan Singh is not convinced of its authenticity. In response to my query, he e-mailed to say: 'I have not before come across the attached document. Prima facie it seems highly unlikely that my father would have deputed a comparatively minor functionary for such an important task.' Those historians who have researched in the maharaja's archives and to whom I have shown this document share my view that it is likely to be genuine. The letter appears to be the 'intriguing document', hitherto undiscovered, about which Alastair Lamb speculates in his book *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute, 1947–1948,* Hertingfordbury, 1997, pp. 143–48.

14. For the drama about Hyderabad's volte face over accession in late October 1947, see H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide: Britain–India–Pakistan*, London, 1969, pp. 478–82.

15. The text of Nehru's broadcast is given in the *Government of India White Paper on Jammu & Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1948, pp. 52–55.

16. Campbell-Johnson, p. 225. Campbell-Johnson was out of India at the time of the defence committee meetings of 25 and 26 October, and was briefed on what happened by Mountbatten on 28 October. It's likely that this account conflates Mountbatten's contributions to the two meetings. The minutes of both defence committee meetings are reprinted in Jha, pp. 197–213.

17. Karan Singh interviewed in Delhi, 2 May 1997. There's also an account in his autobiography, *Heir Apparent*, pp. 57–58.

18. Menon, p. 398.

19. Sam Manekshaw ended his military career as a field marshal. His statement about the mission to Srinagar was recorded by Prem Shankar Jha in December 1994 and appears as an appendix in Jha's book.

20. Karan Singh, pp. 58–59. Victor Rosenthal was a Russian who, in the words of Karan Singh, 'had enjoyed a fabulously chequered and romantic career'. He was one of the maharaja's closest friends and advisers.

21. Mahajan, pp. 151–52, 277. This curious account of a crucial conversation is borne out by Sheikh Abdullah's autobiography, *Flames of the Chinar,* New Delhi, 1993, p. 95. Sheikh Abdullah had apparently flown to Delhi on 25 October, his second visit to the Indian capital since being released from jail the previous month.

22. *White Paper*, p. 3.

23. Menon, pp. 399–400.

24. The most detailed recent accounts of the accession drama are to be found in Lamb, pp. 139–78, Jha, pp. 64–85, and Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War,* London, 2000, pp. 49–72.

25. LP&S/13/1845b, ff.283–95, India Office Records. Symon recorded this in a summary of developments in Kashmir, written in diary form and compiled on 27 October.

26. Mahajan, pp. 152–53. Mahajan regarded the letter carried to Delhi on 24 October by his deputy R.L. Batra as the 'letter of accession', so explaining his reference to 'supplementary documents'.

27. Mahajan, p. 154. In an appendix to his autobiography, Mahajan suggested in passing that the instrument of accession was signed by the maharaja before he left Srinagar, a comment not repeated in his more detailed account of the events surrounding accession. The plane which took Mahajan and Menon to Jammu appears to have flown on to Srinagar with Sheikh Abdullah and a British officer on diplomatic duty, Major W.P. Cranston. LP&S/13/1850, ff.32–35, India Office Records.

28. Jha, pp. 186–91.

29. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945–50: Vol. 1, New Light on Kashmir*, Ahmedabad, 1971. The instrument of accession is in the holdings of India's National Archive. I have been refused permission to consult the document because it is, apparently, classified. A facsimile of the entire document was posted in 2005 at the Indian ministry of home affairs website.

30. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, 2: 4, pp. 278–99.

31. This is also the conclusion of Stanley Wolpert, the biographer of both Jinnah and Nehru—see his *Nehru: A Tryst with Destiny,* Oxford, 1996, pp. 416–17.

32. Jha, p. 212.

33. A copy of the statement, dated 31 October 1947, is in the India Office Records, LP&S/13/1845b, f. 220.

34. LP&S/13/1845b, f.471, India Office Records.

35. The operational instruction is reprinted in the Indian defence ministry's *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir (1947–48)*, New Delhi, 1987, pp. 388–90.

36. S.K. Sinha, *Operation Rescue: Military Operations in Jammu & Kashmir, 1947–49*, New Delhi, 1977, p. 14–16.

37. Cited in Maurice Cohen, *Thunder over Kashmir*, Kolkata, 1955, p. 3.

38. Hiralal Atal, *Nehru's Emissary to Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1972, p. 34–36. Bharat Kumar, *An Incredible War: Indian Air Force in Kashmir War 1947–48*, New Delhi, 2007, p. 47.

39. DO142/494, British National Archives. The high commissioner's memo was dated 1 November 1947.

40. Nehru to Hiralal Atal, 27 October 1947, *Selected Works*, 2:4, pp. 283–86.

41. LP&S/13/1845b, ff.469–70, India Office Records.

42. Mountbatten to Patel, 27 October 1947, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, 1, pp. 68–69. Nehru to Sheikh Abdullah, 27 October 1947, *Selected Works*, 2:4, pp. 279–82.

Chapter 7: Liberating Kashmir

1. Inayatullah (not his full name, which he asked to be withheld) interviewed in Baramulla, 8 March 1997.

2. Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight for Freedom*, Vol. 2, Lahore, 1979, p. 906.

3. Saraf, Vol. 2, p. 908.

4. Statement of Mother Mary of St Conwall (a Scottish woman, Barbara McPhilimy), LP&S/13/1850, f.119, India Office Records, British Library. 'Autres Details Concernant le 27–10–47 Donnés Par Soeur M. Priscilla', undated typescript, f.3, courtesy of Father Jim Borst in Srinagar.

5. LP&S/13/1850, ff.256–57, India Office Records. This telegram from Delhi to London was apparently written on 26 October 1947.

6. *List of Non-Muslim Abducted Women and Children in Pakistan and Pakistan Side of the Cease-Fire Line in Jammu & Kashmir State*, [New Delhi, 1954]. I am indebted to Urvashi Butalia for allowing me to consult her copy of this remarkable and moving book. It is also discussed in Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 134–48. She comments: 'One of the myths that historians of communal conflict have held clear, and that victims of such conflict often help to perpetrate, is that the aggressors are always "outsiders". This list, to me, was conclusive proof of the opposite: so many women had been picked up by men of the same village.'

7. Ranjit Kaur, 'Back Again, After 40 Years', in Ritu Menon (ed.), *No Woman's Land: Women from Pakistan, India & Bangladesh Write on the Partition of India*, New Delhi, 2004, pp. 147–53.

8. Krishna Mehta, *Crisis in Kashmir*, Kolkata, 1954, republished most recently as *Kashmir 1947: A Survivor's Story*, New Delhi, 2005.

9. Margaret Brown, *Cross Every Mountain: The Story of Lily Boal, Missionary to Kashmir, India & Pakistan*, Newtownabbey, 1992, p. 67. For a passing reference to a Kashmiri Sikh boy orphaned in 1947–48 who converted to Islam, see J.H. Harvey-Kelly, 'Kashmir—1948', *Hagha Dagha*, August 1993.

10. Kamla Patel, *Torn from the Roots: A Partition Memoir*, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 171–76. See also Parvez Dewan, *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh: Jammu*, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 154–57.

11. Robert Trumbull, *As I See India*, New York, 1956, p. 89. A cruder version of the same argument was put forward by an Indian army veteran of the conflict: 'Had the tribesmen not delayed at the Baramulla convent for a little recreational rape, the Kashmir war might have been fought differently'—E.A. Vas, *Without Baggage: A Personal Account of the Jammu and Kashmir Operations, October 1947–January 1949*, Dehra Dun, n.d., p. 11.

12. Akbar Khan, *Raiders in Kashmir*, Delhi, n.d., pp. 37–38.

13. *The Times*, 10 November 1947. The estimate of 10,000 fighters in the lashkar was one repeated by the *Observer*, the *New York Times* and the *Hindustan Times*.

14. *Times of India*, 6 November 1947.

15. 'Note on Visit to Abbottabad', 3 ff., DO 142/494, British National Archives. This is a fascinating and detailed account apparently written by C.B. Duke, a British diplomat based in Lahore.

16. Smith's testimony is recorded in DO142/194, as told to British diplomats in Delhi on 11 November 1947.

17. Saraf, Vol. 2, p. 908.

18. *Times of India*, 11 November 1947—a slightly different account appeared in the *Hindustan Times*, 12 November 1947.

19. 'The Burning of Baramulla' by Frank Moraes, *Times of India*, 13 April 1957. Father Shanks's manuscript account of the raid suggests that the Pir of Manki Sharif came to the mission on 29 October.

20. Sir George Cunningham's diary for 29 October 1947, MSS Eur.D.670/6, India Office Records. Much of this entry is also cited in Norval Mitchell, *Sir George Cunningham: A Memoir*, Edinburgh, 1968, pp. 143–45.

21. An authoritative and sympathetic history of the Pakistan army—Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army: Wars and Insurrections*, Oxford, 2000, pp. 18–19—concluded: 'Certainly, the invasion was conducted by tribesmen, but as time went on they were joined and indeed directed by Pakistani officers in civilian guise although referred to by military rank.'

22. When British diplomats enquired about Sydney Smith's account of this large contingent of Punjabis, the Pakistani military authorities suggested that these men were in fact Poonchis, Muslim ex-soldiers from the Poonch area of the princely state. Like Punjabis, Poonchis would have been quite distinct in appearance from both Kashmiris and Pathans.

23. Personal communication from Jim Michaels.

24. Sardar Patel, India's deputy prime minister, was regarded by the Pakistani leadership as a hawk.

25. LP&S/13/1845b, ff.213–9, India Office Records.

26. The article in *Dawn* was datelined Karachi, 7 December 1947 and was included in India's *White Paper* of 1948.

27. Frank Leeson, *Frontier Legion: With the Khassadars of North Waziristan*, Ferring, 2003, p. 211.

28. Qayum Khan's remarks about military training for the Frontier tribes were reported in the *Hindustan Times*, 22 November 1947.

Chapter 8: Heading for Srinagar

1. There are several Indian military memoirs of 1947–48, and some disagreement between them. The most detailed published narrative of the first few days of the Sikh regiment's deployment in Kashmir, in Amarinder Singh, *Lest We Forget*, Patiala, 2000, pp. 19–68, has made use of otherwise unavailable Indian military records. Other Indian accounts with a claim to authority are Kuldip Singh Bajwa, *Jammu and Kashmir War (1947–48): Political and Military Perspective*, New Delhi, 2003, Bharat Kumar, *An Incredible War: Indian Air Force in Kashmir War 1947–48*, New Delhi, 2007; and *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir (1947–48)*, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, 1987. A detailed Pakistani account of the fighting is given in *History of the Azad Kashmir Regiment, Vol. 1, 1947–1949*, Mansar, 1997.

2. DO142/494, British National Archives. The despatch from Lahore was written on 31 October 1947. In the margin in pencil next to the reference to the presence of a British officer in Kashmir is the word 'Untrue'.

3. Cranston's note of 27 November 1947 is in the India Office Records at the British Library, LP&S/13/1850,f.38. Cranston had also made an earlier trip to Srinagar in mid-October 1947.

4. DO 142/494. The official Indian account suggests nine Indian fatalities in these initial exchanges—Amarinder Singh, p. 42.

5. Agha Humayun Amin, 'The war of lost opportunities: Part 1', from the online edition of the *Defence Journal*, Karachi, April 2000.

6. Kumar, p. 53.

7. *New York Times*, 2 November 1947. L.P. Sen, *Slender Was the Thread: Kashmir Confrontation, 1947–48*, Delhi, 1994, pp. 60–61.

8. *The Times*, 1 November 1947.

9. Brigadier Hiralal Atal provided a detailed account of the evacuation, conducted 'without exposing the family to detection which would have brought [Sheikh Abdullah] into disrepute and gravely affected his leadership', in his book *Nehru's Emissary to Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1972, pp. 51–54. Nehru wrote from Delhi to Sheikh Abdullah in Srinagar on 31 October, mentioning in passing that 'Begum Abdullah and family are leaving by plane early tomorrow for Indore', *Selected Works*, 2:4, pp. 294–95.

10. *Times of India*, 9 October 1947.

11. Nehru to Hiralal Atal, *Selected Works*, 2:4. pp. 283–86.

12. *The Times*, 28, 29 and 31 October 1947. Sheikh Abdullah's own brief account of the recruitment and deployment of 'the People's Militia' is in his autobiography, *Flames of the Chinar*, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 93–94.

13. Kuldip Singh Bajwa, pp. 112–13.

14. *Hindustan Times*, 3 November 1947. *Statesman*, 8 November 1947.

15. National Army Museum, London, 1963–12–248–4. The letter is dated '6.10.47' but that's clearly an error—it was probably written on or around 6 November. Gwen Burton (otherwise Mrs Gwen Bird) wrote as a postscript: 'I am giving this to a Air Pilot to post in Delhi.' The Delhi postmark is dated 10 November 1947. I am grateful to her nephew, Gilbert Burton, for permission to quote from this letter.

16. Ajit Bhattacharjea, *Kashmir: The Wounded Valley*, Delhi, 1994, p. x.

17. Margaret Parton's papers, including letters to her mother written while in Kashmir, are at the Division of Special Collections, University of Oregon. Margaret Parton, *Journey through a Lighted Room*, New York, 1973, pp. 113–14. See also her earlier book *The Leaf and the Flame*, New York, 1959.

18. *Hindustan Times*, 6 November 1947.

19. *Dawn*, 24 October 1947.

20. Sat Paul Sahni went on to be a key figure in the Kashmir press corps and later became the Director General of Information for Farooq Abdullah, Sheikh Abdullah's son and political heir.

21. *New York Herald Tribune*, 2 November 1947. Also *New York Times*, 2 November 1947. DO 142/494, report from British diplomat in Lahore on 28–29 October 1947.

22. Personal communication from Jim Michaels. He eventually got better access to Kashmir travelling from Rawalpindi in Pakistan, and met and interviewed leaders of the Azad Kashmir movement in Poonch.

23. Akbar Khan, *Raiders in Kashmir*, Delhi, n.d., pp. 35–36.

24. Akbar Khan, pp. 39–40. *Dawn*, 31 October 1947. Although there appear to have been no major accidents at the overcrowded airstrip at Srinagar, more than twenty Indian servicemen were killed on 31 October when a Dakota crashed near the Banihal pass–Kumar, p. 50.

25. L.P. Sen, pp. 66–67. *Washington Post*, 3 November 1947. Personal communication from Max Desfor. Several of his photographs were published in *Sphere*, 15 November 1947.

26. *Statesman*, 5 November 1947.

27. L.P. Sen, p. 74.

28. *Dawn* datelined Karachi, 7 December 1947 and cited in the Indian government's *White Paper* of the following year. Khurshid Anwar had been injured on 10 November, apparently by a splinter from an Indian bomb. He was getting medical treatment in Karachi at the time of the *Dawn* interview. He died a few months later.

29. Harbakhsh Singh, *In the Line of Duty: A Soldier Remembers*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 200–03.

30. *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir*, pp. 38–39.

31. *Times of India*, 7 November 1947.

32. *New York Herald Tribune*, 7 November 1947.

33. L.P. Sen, pp. 98–99.

34. *Dawn*, 8 November 1947 and report datelined 7 December 1947.

35. Akbar Khan, pp. 47–55. M. Ibrahim Khan, *The Kashmir Saga*, Mirpur, 1990, p. 135. *History of the Azad Kashmir Regiment, Vol. 1*, pp. 206–07.

36. Agha Humayun Amin, 'The war of lost opportunities: Part 1'.

37. Parton, *The Leaf and the Flame*, p. 274.

Chapter 9: 'Ten Days of Terror'

1. Father Shanks diary on pages for 14–21 June.

2. Father Shanks's typescript account of the attack on Baramulla, f. 6.

3. *Jusqu'à La Mort*, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Paris, 1956, p. 113.

4. Shanks diary entry on pages for March 28–31.

5. Diary of Sir George Cunningham, 7 November 1947, MSS Eur.D 670/6, India Office Records, British Library. The extent to which Bates derived his account of Kaushalya from Smith's reports in the *Daily Express* is discussed in chapter 11.

6. 'Notes of a Statement made by Major J.E. Thomson [sic] . . .' 3 ff., DO142/494, British National Archives.

7. A copy of the text of Father Shanks's letter is in the India Office Records, LP&S/13/1850, f. 114. It was also cited in the *Statesman*, 18 November 1947.

8. Aslam Khan's father, Brigadier Rahmatullah Khan, was placed under arrest and eventually released by the Indian authorities as part of a prisoner exchange, as detailed in Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War*, London, 2000, p. 64 and P.N. Sharma, *Inside Pak Occupied Kashmir*, Delhi, 1958, p. 111.

9. The inscription on the rear, in Veronica Shanks's hand, dated the photograph to 1946. It is more likely to have been taken at the time of the lashkar's incursion in the following year.

10. Rev. G. Shanks, 'Au Revoir, Baramulla!', *Missions and Missionaries*, London, Summer 1948, pp. 8–10.

11. My lengthy attempts to track down Sydney Smith ended when I chanced upon his obituary in the *Daily Telegraph*, 6 February 2002, from which details of his life and career are taken. Smith had lived for many years in France, where he died on 12 December 2001, aged eighty-nine.

12. DO142/494, British National Archives.

13. Ignacio Omaechevarria, *Una Victima Perfecta*, Vitoria, 1949, p. 161, suggests that Smith joined the other captives on 2 November, the seventh day of their ordeal, relying apparently on the account of Sister Priscilla.

14. *Selected Works*, 2: 4, New Delhi, 1986, p. 317.

15. *Daily Express*, 11 November 1947.

16. Father Shanks, typescript, f. 7.

17. Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, *Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiography*, Lahore, 1971, pp. 232–38. Begum Shahnawaz's account is unreliable, suggesting among other things that her daughter flew into Baramulla. Tazi Shahnawaz died in a plane crash in 1948 at the age of 35. There is a brief but affectionate pen portrait of her by the *Herald Tribune*'s Margaret Parton, *Journey through a Lighted Room*, New York, 1973, p. 109.

18. LP&S/13/1850, f.159, India Office Records.

19. A copy of Lily Boal's letter, written at Haripur in the North West Frontier Province and dated 8 November, is in the India Office Records at LP&S/13/1850, ff.66–67. Accounts of Davies's mission and death are given in Jock Purves, *Lal Sahib: The Story of Ronald Davies, Missionary, Soldier, Martyr*, Stirling, 1950, and in Margaret Brown, *Cross Every Mountain: The Story of Lily Boal, Missionary to Kashmir, India and Pakistan*, Newtownabbey, 1992.

20. *Daily Express*, 10 November 1947. I am grateful to the *Daily Express* for permission to include extracts from the newspaper in this book.

21. *Daily Express*, 11 November 1947.

22. L.P. Sen, *Slender Was the Thread: Kashmir Confrontation, 1947–48*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 103.

23. P.N. Sharma, p. 16.
24. *New York Herald Tribune*, 11 November 1947.
25. *The Times,* 11 November 1947.
26. Copyright by the New York Times Co. Reprinted with permission.
27. *Times of India*, 11 November 1947. Mahmud of Ghazni was an eleventh century Muslim ruler noted for the reputed violence of his incursions into India.
28. LP&S/13/1850, f.36, India Office Records.
29. LP&S/13/1850, ff. 20, 76.
30. *Hindustan Times*, 14 November 1947. *Times of India*, 13 November 1947.

Chapter 10: War

1. There is a brief account of the demonstration at which Lone was beaten up in Manoj Joshi's *The Lost Rebellion: Kashmir in the Nineties*, New Delhi, 1999, p. 261.
2. Abdul Ghani Lone was shot dead on 21 May 2002 at a memorial meeting in Srinagar for Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq, also believed to have been killed by armed separatists. For accounts of Lone's killing and the way it was reported, see Arun Joshi, *Eyewitness Kashmir*, Singapore, 2004, pp. 236–8, and Muzamil Jaleel, 'Deciphering Silence in Kashmir', in B.G. Verghese (ed.), *Breaking the Big Story: Great Moments in Indian Journalism*, New Delhi, 2003. Obituaries stated that Lone had been born in 1932.
3. L.P. Sen, *Slender Was the Thread: Kashmir Confrontation 1947–48*, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 80, 87.
4. *Times of India,* 10 November 1947.
5. Margaret Parton papers, Division of Special Collections, University of Oregon. This letter took the form of a travel journal, of which this section appears to have been written on 10 and 14 November 1947.
6. The *Times of India* and the *Statesman,* 15 November 1947, both quoted prisoners as alleging Pakistani government complicity in the raid. See also testimony included in Government of India *White Paper on Jammu & Kashmir*, 1948.
7. *Hindustan Times*, 20 November 1947. Similar remarks by Sheikh Abdullah were reported in the *Statesman*, 18 November 1947. In a robust piece of political rhetoric, Sheikh Abdullah also declared it a 'duty of every Mussalman to start a jihad (holy war) against these raiders who are spoiling the [fair] name of Islam'—*Statesman*, 27 November 1947.
8. *Times of India*, 11 November 1947.
9. *White Paper on Jammu & Kashmir*, p. 26. See also Sheikh Abdullah, *Flames of the Chinar*, New Delhi, 1993, p. 99.
10. *New York Times*, 16 November 1947. *Hindustan Times*, 21 November 1947.

11. Sen, *Slender Was the Thread*, pp. 113–14.

12. *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir, (1947–48)*, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, 1987, pp. 71–76. The defence committee meetings referred were held on 28 November and 3 December 1947.

13. Harbakhsh Singh, *In the Line of Duty: A Soldier Remembers*, New Delhi, 2000, p. 207.

14. Akbar Khan, *Raiders in Kashmir*, Delhi, p. 47. *Dawn*, 12 November 1947.

15. Article in *Dawn* datelined 7 December [1947] cited in the Indian government's *White Paper* of 1948.

16. DO142/494, British National Archives.

17. Akbar Khan, *Raiders in Kashmir*, pp. 90–91.

18. *Statesman*, 28 November 1947.

19. Sen, *Slender Was the Thread*, p. 143.

20. *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir*, pp. 87–88. See also Sen, pp. 146–51 and Harbakhsh Singh, pp. 216–17.

21. For brief accounts of the Gilgit 'rebellion', see Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War*, London, 2000, pp. 62–64, and Alistair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition*, Hertingfordbury, 1997, pp. 190–95. And for the account of the instigator, William A. Brown, *The Gilgit Rebellion 1947*, London, 1998.

22. Christopher Snedden, 'What Happened to Muslims in Jammu? Local Identity, "the Massacre" of 1947 and the Roots of the "Kashmir Problem"', *South Asia*, 2001, 24/2, pp. 111–34.

23. Parvez Dewan, *Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh: Jammu*, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 116–60. Alexander Evans's forthcoming essay on communal violence in Jammu division in 1947 argues that over 300,000 people were displaced from Indian-administered and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, and that thousands of Hindus and Sikhs and tens of thousands of Muslims were killed.

24. *History of the Azad Kashmir Regiment, Vol. 1 (1947–49)*, Mansar, 1997, p. 27.

25. Autobiographical notes compiled by Russell Haight in 2005, and provided to me by his daughter, Alexandra Haight Furr. Haight—a veteran of both the Canadian and US armies who served in the Second World War and later in Korea and in Vietnam—died in Norman, Oklahoma, aged eighty-four in 2006.

26. *Rocky Mountain News*, undated cutting, probably November 1947. I am grateful to Alexandra Haight Furr for sending me copies of a compilation of newspaper cuttings relating to her father's time in Kashmir, and of the note from the Azad Kashmir government.

27. *Daily Express*, 25 November 1947.

28. *New York Times*, 29 January 1948. Copyright by The New York Times Co. Reprinted with permission.

29. Robert Trumbull, *As I See India*, New York, 1956, pp. 92–93.

30. Letter dated 8 January 1948, DO142/494, British National Archives.

31. Cunningham Diary, 7 November 1947.

32. Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army: Wars and Insurrections*, Oxford, 2000, pp. 18–21.

33. *White Paper on Jammu & Kashmir*, pp. 52–55. The text of Nehru's broadcast was also carried in the *Times of India*, 3 November 1947 and in other daily papers.

34. *Hindustan Times*, 12 November 1947. *Times of India*, 17 November 1947.

35. Alongside Nehru's public stance, in private correspondence he showed some willingness to be flexible on the Kashmir issue. In a somewhat overlooked letter to the maharaja on 1 December 1947, Nehru canvassed the options of a plebiscite, or independence or various partition lines and was reconciled to the possibility of areas such as Poonch being part of Pakistan. Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*, London, 2007, pp. 71–72.

[36]The full text of the resolution is given in Josef Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, Princeton, 1966, pp. 357–62. The resolution's failure to consider any other option for Kashmir but accession to either India or Pakistan was a blow to any remaining aspirations for independence.

[37]Korbel, pp. 97, 198, 207. Korbel's daughter, Madeleine Albright, was several decades later the US secretary of state.

38. The theme of Soviet ambitions in Kashmir formed the backdrop to a thriller set amid Srinagar and the ski slopes of Gulmarg, M.M. Kaye's *Death in Kashmir*. Mollie Kaye was born in India and knew Kashmir well.

39. Korbel, p. 121.

40. *History of Operations in Jammu and Kashmir*, p. 171 et seq.

41. Cited in R.J. Moore, *Making the New Commonwealth*, Oxford, 1987, p. 83.

42. Moore, p. 89. Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition*, pp. 241–42, cites different figures, which show a less clear-cut but still significant imbalance in the role of British officers and troops in the Indian and Pakistani armed forces.

43. Lt Col. J.H. Harvey-Kelly's account of his mission to Kashmir was serialized in a regimental veterans' journal *Hagha Dagha* and republished in abridged form in the *Indian Army Association Newsletter* in April 1998. He named Major Johnnie Benskin of the Kurram Militia as another British officer who saw active service in Kashmir, and was later withdrawn on orders from above. The story of Harvey-Kelly's involvement in Kashmir also featured in his obituary in the *Daily Telegraph*, 17 October 1994.

44. Telegrams and letters dated 8 January, 16 January and 30 January 1948, DO142/494, British National Archives. Alastair Lamb suggests that one British officer died on service with Pakistan forces in Kashmir, and up to twelve

others were at times deployed there in 1948—*Incomplete Partition*, p. 242. See also Parvez Dewan, *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh: Jammu*, New Delhi, 2007, p. 137.

45. Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict*, p. 67.

Chapter 11: Telling Stories and Making Myths

1. Sir George Cunningham, Diary, 4 November 1947, MSS Eur.D.607/6, India Office Records, British Library. The second woman journalist was probably Lee Eitingon, a *Life* reporter who often worked in tandem with the photographer Bourke-White.

2. Margaret Bourke-White, *Portrait of Myself*, New York, 1963, p. 272. Bourke-White died in 1971 at the age of sixty-seven.

3. Vicki Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography*, London, 1987, p. 311. Several of Bourke-White's most memorable photographs of Partition were republished in 2006 in a special edition of one of the most famous of Partition novels, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*.

4. Margaret Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom: A Report on the New India*, New York, 1949, p. xi.

5. Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom*, p. 206.

6. Despatch from Peshawar to Karachi, 27 November [1947], DO 142/494, British National Archives.

7. Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom*, pp. 207–08.

8. B.P.L. 'Baba' Bedi was a communist and close adviser to Sheikh Abdullah, who later moved away from political activism to pursue spiritual concerns. He died in 1993 aged eighty-three. His British wife, Freda, who also lived for several years in Kashmir, turned from left-wing politics to become a renowned practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism.

9. Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom*, p. 211. These reminiscences, while richly illustrated, contain no photographs from Baramulla or Abbottabad. Bourke-White's photos and negatives, as well as some personal papers, are held at Syracuse University Library in New York, which advises that none are labelled in a manner to suggest they were taken in Kashmir.

10. Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom*, pp. 210–11. 'Mujahid' means 'holy warrior', and in more recent years has come to denote an Islamic radical pursuing jihad in Afghanistan, Kashmir or elsewhere.

11. Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight for Freedom*, Vol. 2, Lahore, 1979, pp. 942–43. The incident during Jinnah's 1944 visit is recounted in Saraf, Vol. 1, p. 633 and Parvez Dewan, *Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh: Kashmir*, New Delhi, 2004, p. 86.

12. *Times of India*, *Statesman*, *Hindustan Times*, 11 November 1947.

13. I am grateful to P.N. Jalali for making available to me cuttings from the *People's Age* apparently from issues of November and December 1947.

14. *Statesman*, 22 November 1947.

15. Sheikh Abdullah, *Flames of the Chinar*, New Delhi, 1993, p. 96. L.P. Sen, *Slender Was the Thread: Kashmir Confrontation, 1947–48*, New Delhi, 1994, p. 141. *Kashmir Defends Democracy*, New Delhi, 1948, p. 10. *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir (1947–48)*, Ministry of Defence, New Delhi, 1987, p. 23. Parvez Dewan, *Parvez Dewan's Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh: Kashmir,* New Delhi, 2004, p. 94.

16. Saros Cowasjee, *So Many Freedoms: A Study of the Major Fiction of Mulk Raj Anand*, Delhi, 1977, pp. 163–65.

17. *V.K. Krishna Menon's Marathon Speech on Kashmir at the U.N. Security Council*, Allahabad, 1992, p. 26.

18. From the section entitled 'Mujahid Sherwani' in Somnath Dhar's 'Tales of Kashmir', www.ikashmir.org/sndhar/9.html

19. *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir*, p. 31. Rai was posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, a decoration for military gallantry.

20. *I Will Be the First: The Story of Mother Mary Teresalina*, London, 1957, p. 29. In a later reprint, the dying words have been edited, rather clumsily, to suggest that the nun offered herself for the 'people' not the 'conversion' of Kashmir.

21. Father Ignacio Omaechevarria, *Una Victima Perfecta*, Vitoria, 1949, p. 142. *Jusqu'a là Mort*, Rome, 1956, p. 130.

22. H. Nirmalraj [Father Hormise Nirmal Raj], 'Unknown Churches, Unknown Martyrs', an undated 103ff. typescript in the Mill Hill archive. Spelling and grammar has been slightly amended. This study was written in 1976. I am grateful to the Mill Hill archivist, Father Hans Boerakker, for his kindness in making available to me a copy of the typescript and putting me in touch with Father Nirmal Raj.

23. There are better attested accounts of Hindu and Sikh women drowning themselves in Muzaffarabad, notably in Krishna Mehta, *Kashmir 1947: A Survivor's Story*, New Delhi, 2005, a new edition of a book first published in the 1950s.

24. The Thoa Khalsa deaths feature in Bhisham Sahni's novel *Tamas* and the incident is explored and recounted in Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India,* New Delhi, 1998, pp. 193–245.

25. *Daily Express,* 10 November 1947.

26. George Shanks to Very Rev. T. McLaughlin, 23 November 1947, Mill Hill archive.

27. The telegram is date-stamped 31 August 1948. I am grateful to Sydney Smith's daughter, Peta Adès, for lending me some of her father's cuttings books and much other help. She is unaware of the location of any diary kept by her father during this period.

28. Undated letter from Anthony Havelock-Allan at Constellation Films to the Very Rev. Thomas McLaughlin, who acknowledged receipt on 21 April 1949. The letter, along with several other documents relating to the Mill Hill missionaries in Kashmir, is in the 'Pakistan' files in the Mill Hill archive.

29. H.E. Bates, *The Scarlet Sword*, pp. 13–15. Page references are to the edition published by Cassell Military Paperbacks in 2001. The argument about Bates's literary borrowing from Sydney Smith was made in my review article, 'Bates and Baramulla', published in *Biblio*, New Delhi, November/December 2001, pp. 17–18. Father Shanks's account of Kaushalya has been discussed in Chapter 9.

30. Bates, *Scarlet Sword*, p. 157.

31. Dean R. Baldwin, *H.E. Bates: A Literary Life*, Selinsgrove, 1987, p. 169. I am grateful to Professor Baldwin for his readily offered insights into Bates's literary method, and his guidance on contemporary reviews of *The Scarlet Sword*. The review cited appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, 27 January 1951.

32. Bates, *Scarlet Sword*, p. 52.

33. Alan Moorehead, *The Rage of the Vulture*, London, 1948, p. 136. Almost sixty years later, events in Kashmir in 1947 featured prominently in Salman Rushdie's Kashmir novel *Shalimar the Clown*.

34. Ian Stephens, *Horned Moon: An Account of a Journey through Pakistan, Kashmir, and Afghanistan*, London, 1953, p. 109. The quotes were from a contemporary memorandum written by Stephens.

35. Stephens, *Horned Moon*, p. 202. Azad, or 'Free', Kashmir refers to that part under Pakistan's control.

36. Stephens, *Horned Moon*, p. 218.

37. Ian Stephens, *Pakistan*, New York, 1963, pp. 193–203.

38. L.F. Rushbrook Williams, *The State of Pakistan*, London, 1962, p. 78.

39. Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute, 1947–1948*, Hertingfordbury, 1997, p. 187.

40. Hasan Zaheer, *The Times and Trial of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy 1951: The First Coup Attempt in Pakistan*, Karachi, 1998, p. 145.

41. *Times of India*, 13 April 1957.

42. 'Sack of Baramula Recalled: Story Told by Foreign Survivors', *Kashmir*, November 1958, pp. 273 et seq. I am grateful to Khurshid Guru for e-mailing me a copy of this article.

43. *New York Times*, 11 November 1947.

44. V.P. Menon, *Integration of the Indian States*, Hyderabad, 1985, p. 406. Other examples of misleading citing of Trumbull's figures include Sisir Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India-Pakistan Relations*, Mumbai, 1966, p. 111; Jyoti Bhusan Das Gupta, *Jammu and Kashmir*, The Hague, 1968, p. 96; Amarinder Singh, *Lest We Forget*, Patiala, 2000, p. 19.

45. Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, *Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly: Opening Address*, 1951, p. 17.

Chapter 12: 'I Think They'll Try Again'

1. The downfall of Sheikh Abdullah and the breach between Srinagar and Delhi is told briefly but effectively in Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*, London, 2003.

2. The issue of what was said at Shimla is discussed, with varying conclusions, in Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute, 1947–1948*, Hertingfordbury, 1997, pp. 295–96; Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War*, London, 2000, pp. 16–121; Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace*, Cambridge, 1997, pp. 59–63; and Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, Yale, 2002, pp. 80–81.

3. One senior Indian army officer commented of Kargil: 'What has happened seems similar to what Pakistan did in 1947 and 1965 when it used the façade of Mujaheddins and Kabailis'—cited in Praveen Swami, *The Kargil War*, New Delhi, 2005, p. 27.

4. The most significant writings by Kashmiri Muslims about the conflict and its antecedents are in large part autobiographical, notably Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, *Flames of the Chinar*, Delhi, 1993, and Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight for Freedom*, 2 Vols, Lahore, 1977 and 1979.

5. Saraf, Vol. 2, p. 903.

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All face-to-face interviews and most phone interviews conducted for this study were recorded on audio cassette or mini-disc. Recordings of interviews conducted in or before 2000, along with partial transcripts and interview notes, have been deposited in the archive of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London—reference GB 0102 OA3. The material relating to Kashmir is part of a bigger oral archive of memories of Partition compiled and largely conducted by Andrew Whitehead.

Recordings and transcripts of interviews conducted since 2000 are also being deposited in the SOAS archive.

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Khan Shah Afridi, veteran of tribal lashkar: Mattni near Peshawar, May 2003 [by Haroon Rashid]

Harshi Anand: Delhi, 25 May 2005

Angela Aranha: Bangalore, 8 February 2003 [by Charles Haviland]

Anoop Singh Bali, Gunwant Kaur Bali and **Randir Singh Bali:** Baramulla, 1 May 2003

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